

# The Brooklyn Paper

Including The Brooklyn Heights Paper, Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill Paper, DUMBO Paper and the Downtown News



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## Loosen your belts!

### Fairway, an uptown Manhattan grocer, opens its gourmet garage in Red Hook

By Gersh Kuntzman  
The Brooklyn Papers

Let the gourmands begin!

Foodies from as far as Bay Ridge and as nearby as the Red Hook Houses stormed Brooklyn's new Fairway Market Wednesday, snapping up organic produce, chewing the fat (of the store's house-made sausage), enjoying the view of the Statue of Liberty from the store's café, and vowing that grocery shopping in Brooklyn will never be the same.

"Who needs Fresh Direct or Park Natural [an upscale market on Court Street] when we have this?" said shopper Dana Goldberg, who drove from Clinton Hill to be at the opening.

But it wasn't just the gourmands cheering.

"I have lived on Coffey Street [in Red Hook] since 1962 and this is the first good thing to happen here since I moved in," said Barbara Stevens.

"Look at this place. It's beautiful, the food is fresh, high quality and very reasonable. We're going to save money and eat better. Who could argue with that?"

But will the excitement last? After all, the new Fairway, which occupies 52,000 square feet in a converted Civil-War-era coffee warehouse on the Red Hook waterfront, joins an already-crowded field of gourmet grocers in Brooklyn.



A worker picks out fish for a customer on the Red Hook Fairway's opening day.



The Dodger Symphony band performed at Wednesday's grand opening of Fairway in Red Hook.

Fairway will compete with "foodiques" like Union Market in Park Slope, Foragers in DUMBO and Garden of Eden in Brooklyn Heights; old-line supermarkets, including several Key Foods that are upgrading to meet new customer demands; the giant Pathmark nearby on Hamilton Avenue; health food markets like Perelandra in Brooklyn Heights, Back to the Land in Park Slope, and Park Natural in Cobble Hill; Fresh Direct; a coming Whole Foods Market on Third Avenue on the Gowanus side of Park Slope; and even the politically charged Park Slope Food Coop, whose thousands of members work a three-hour shift every month in exchange for reduced prices and a communal environment.

"We can take them all on," said Fairway owner Howard Glickberg.

Before we opened, I priced every store in the area. On staples, like Bounty paper towels, toilet paper, cleaning supplies, we can't be beat. And our produce is fresher and better than everyone else's. We buy direct. We cut out the middleman.

Glickberg said he would even make converts of the Food Coop's notoriously devout members.

"We have everything — fresh fish, prepared foods — so they won't have to go anywhere else," he said.

And he insists he's not concerned about Fresh Direct.

See FAIRWAY on page 8



## Redford at BAM

"Little Miss Sunshine" screenwriter Michael Arndt (left) joins Sundance Institute President Robert Redford and Brooklyn Borough President Markowitz at the opening of "Sundance Institute at BAM." GO Girl has more from the invitation-only party in GO Brooklyn, page 9.

## Library boss quits

Never quite at home in Brooklyn, Cooper checks herself out, moves to Washington

By Dana Rubinstein  
The Brooklyn Papers

The embattled executive director of the Brooklyn Public Library whose reputation has grown dog-eared during her three-and-a-half-year stint — has quit.

"After long and careful thought, I have decided to accept the challenge of another position in library land," said Ginie Cooper, who will become the reader in chief for the Washington, DC, library system.

She said the decision to leave Brooklyn "was a difficult one."

Perhaps. But her decision

See LIBRARY on page 8



Brooklyn Public Library Executive Director Ginie Cooper quit to take over the much-smaller Washington, DC, public library.

## 'Oracle' returns to Slope

EDITORIAL P 15

UP, UP, AND OY VEY!  
CHECKIN' IN WITH... P 16

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BRIEFS SEE PAGE 4

EMPLOYMENT  
SERVICES P 18

By Gersh Kuntzman  
The Brooklyn Papers

Question: Is this going to be an informative, interesting story about a beloved Brooklyn institution?

Answer: Keep going, dear reader, and all questions will be answered.

That's at least the promise posted on The Oracle, that large LED sign atop Pintchick Hardware on Flatbush Avenue in Park Slope, which will return to service on Saturday, May 27, after a winter break.

"The Oracle didn't want people get rained or snowed on," said Matt Pintchick, owner of the store, the sign and the legend of the Oracle. Pintchick made the final arrangements this week, setting up the antique phone that questioners pick up to query the great Oracle.

According to legend, about three years ago, Pintchick's old sign broke, forcing him to buy the larger model as a replacement. A few months later, someone wandered into the store claiming he had a gift for soothsaying, or, in this case, soothyspining.

Intrigued, Pintchick put the old-style hand-crank phone on the street so passers-by could have their fortunes told. With his quirky sense of humor, the Oracle soon had a huge following. People gathered nearby to feel its mighty power. Two couples got engaged underneath it. Some laid fruit and other offerings at the phone. A man set up a hot dog cart (although it is unclear whether he was drawn by the Oracle or its teeming, hungry masses).

Like the Great Oz himself, the identity of the Oracle has remained shrouded in secrecy (except, of course, when it is identified as Park Slope writer Jonathan Safran Foer, who has, for the record, neither confirmed nor denied his complicity).

Pintchick pulled the same "neither confirm nor deny" schtick, but he did call the Oracle on his cellphone and hand the device to a Brooklyn Papers reporter, who grilled the fortune-teller.

"Why do I do this?" it said in a male-sounding voice (it could have been digitally altered, though). "A strange and peculiar gift was bestowed upon me."

See ORACLE on page 8



Matt Pintchick talks to the Oracle, outside Pintchick's hardware store on Flatbush Avenue at Bergen Street.

## DUMBO orchid man hides behind his plants

By Ariella Cohen  
The Brooklyn Papers

DUMBO artists are certainly an endangered species these days — but now one man is fighting eviction by claiming protection under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Steve Ludlum, a painter, photographer and amateur botanist, isn't seeking the federal protection for himself, but for the nearly 1,000 species of imported orchids that he raises in his third-floor loft.

He may be onto something: Some of his orchids are classified as "endangered" under international law.

The owner of the former soap factory under the Manhattan Bridge wants to flatten the building to build a 10-story loft-style condo tower.

"Me and my plants aren't going to take the bullet so a developer can make money," said Ludlum, standing in the humid, man-made ecosystem he has spent \$100,000 building.

"The last landlord didn't mind. He thought the whole thing was neat."

Ludlum's orchids fill a room the size of a studio apartment. Five ceiling fans and a ventilation system regulate the temperature. A hand-rigged irrigation system pipes water to the plants, sending earthy runoff to a drain behind the building.

Last week, the unassuming botanist — a regular on the orchid circuit — filed a lawsuit against his landlord in federal court, charging that his eviction would "result in [the] loss of endangered species" and violate laws protecting his threatened *Phragmipedium* and *Paphiopedilum* "lady-slipper" orchids.

"Orchid plants are habitat-specific," he



Orchid man Steve Ludlum, who is being evicted from his third-floor loft at 37 Bridge Street in DUMBO.

charged in court papers. "Removal from their current location, which is a necessary and required controlled environment, shall constitute a taking of the protected orchid plant."

Ludlum said the building's current owner, identified in city documents as Henry Kotowitz, would welcome his quiet enterprise were it not for the fact that a condo conversion would be so lucrative.

Neither Kotowitz nor his lawyer returned phone calls from The Brooklyn Papers.

The case is the first of its kind, but wildlife experts said that Ludlum will face problems proving that his imported flora require protection from the feds.

Federal law protects endangered species from "take" or "harm" — terms that can include eviction — but the law only applies to plants protected under state jurisdiction.

See ORCHIDS on page 8

## Ratner \$\$ can't buy love

Rhubarb at PS 321

SMARTMOM FORGOT that parents were supposed to dress up 1960s-style for the PS 321 Auction and Dance Friday night at the Brooklyn Museum.

Smartmom, looking decidedly un-'60s in black Aerosole sandals and a silk jacket, was more concerned about the article.

Dumb Editor asked her to write about the controversy surrounding Forest City Ratner's cash donation of \$7,500, his "underwriting" of the event.

For this low, low price, he got a big, big mention in the auction program. For some parents, just seeing "Forest City Ratner" on the program killed the party mood. A few even refused to participate.

The school, which opened in 1966 (hence the '60s theme), raises around \$50,000 at this annual event, which was held in the museum's gorgeous Beaux Arts Court decorated with bright neon flowers.

Moms drinking cranberry Margaritas were dressed in long floral dresses and peasant blouses. One mom looked very Carnaby Street in knee-high red boots and a psychedelic shirt. Another one channeled Cher in false eyelashes and black bell-bottoms. There were even some dais done up in Hippie style.

"How do you like our private school-style auction?" Smartmom whispered to Hepcat as they waited in line for coffee and miniature "flower power" cup cakes. Berkeley Carroll, a Park Slope private school, also holds its annual auction at the Brooklyn Museum. Talk about keeping up with the Joneses. As the neighborhood becomes more upscale, so does PS 321 and so does the auction.

See RATNER on page 17

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See wine column on page 11



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# 2-year-old mugged walking on Smith St

By Lilo H. Stainton

The Brooklyn Paper

Four thieves robbed a 12-year-old heading home from school on Smith Street May 8, police said. The thugs surrounded the boy near Degraw Street at 3:15 p.m. and demanded he turn over his cash. The robbers pulled through his bookbag and pulled out \$40, a CD player and a cellphone, which is, as the mayor is fond of telling us, illegal in schools. But for some reason, they returned the mobile phone before dashing off down Smith Street toward Atlantic Avenue. The victim couldn't describe his attackers in detail.

## Heights mug

A posse of thieves snatched an iPod from a man walking home on Willow Street near Cranberry Street, at dusk on May 11, police said.

A group of 10 teenage thugs surrounded the 28-year-old victim at 7:40 p.m. One brute struck him from behind, knocking him to the ground and another grabbed the popular digital music device. The posse then fled toward Orange Street.

The victim provided few details about his attackers.

## One sad bandit

Many criminals have a sad story. But one robber used pity as a ploy to rob a Fulton Street bank.

The thief walked into the bank, at Jay Street, around 1 p.m. on May 10 and passed the

## POLICE BLOTTER

teller a long and sorry-sounding note, police said.

This is a robbery — any attempt to alert anyone or press any alarm will force me to harm your customers," the man wrote.

He then moved from threats to guilt, with, "My little girl's operation is depending on this money, so I strongly advise you to co-operate. Give me all your \$100s and \$50s and don't touch nothing but the money." The teller calmly placed the \$550 into a bag — then added the famed exploding die pack — and turned the bag over to the thief, who fled on Jay Street, heading toward the subway station.

Police are searching for a black man, 5-foot-8 tall, 140 pounds. His mismatched wardrobe provoked additional pity: he was wearing a black baseball hat, a gray dress jacket, black pants and — unfortunately — tan shoes.

## Halfway attack

A Queens woman survived another workday only to be robbed by three thugs leaving her Lawrence Street job on May 12, police said.

The trio of thieves stopped the 56-year-old victim as she made her way to the door of the building near Wiloughby Street at 2:30 p.m. The robbers snatched her purse and her jewelry — a gold watch, earrings and several bracelets — and fled onto Lawrence Street before the victim could focus on their faces.

## Early bird heist

Two armed thieves got more than a woken when they robbed a Queens man at 8:30 a.m. on May 11.

The pair approached the 18-year-old victim as he walked along Prince Street near Johnson Street, police said. One flicked open a knife and demanded the victim's cash and cellphone. They got the cell, but no money, and fled without harming the man.

The knife-man is described as black, 5-foot-9, 150 pounds and dressed in a hooded jacket. Few details were available on the second thug.

## Armed mug

A thief threatened to shoot his victim over a cellphone during a mugging in the Metrotech complex on May 13, police said.

The robber stopped the 16-year-old boy near Lawrence Street as he made his way toward the Jay Street subway station at 10:20 p.m.

"Give me your cellphone or I'm gonna shoot you," he declared, before snatching the phone and bolting toward the subway.

Police are looking for a

black man 5-foot-8 tall and 140 pounds, dressed in a white sweat shirt and sporting a stolen Motorola Razz.

## Thief begs

A quick-thinking clerk forced a would-be thief to leave his Hamilton Avenue gas station empty-handed on May 8.

The suspect wandered into the filling station's shop near Smith Street around 10:20 p.m. and gave the clerk \$5 to purchase a soda. When the employee rang up the pop and opened the register, the man reached over the counter and grabbed the cash from the drawer.

But before the thief could flee, the clerk locked the front door, capturing the criminal

inside. The powder pleaded with the robber, asking, "If you let me leave, I'll give you the money back." The clerk recovered the cash and the man bolted out the back door empty-handed, running along Smith Street toward the F train station nearby.

Video of the incident shows the thief to be a black man, 5-foot-10, dressed in a black jacket and blue jeans.

## Halfway heist

A burglar snatched a purse from the vestibule of a Union Street home, near Smith Street, early on May 15, police said.

The robber slipped through the unlocked front door between 3 a.m. and 11 a.m., grabbing the purse from a bench inside the door. He made off with more than two dozen items worth \$330, including several gift cards, \$40 and the 30-year-old victim's passport.

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# 1 am was time to rob the bagels on 7th Ave

By Lilo H. Stainton  
The Brooklyn Papers

Time to rob the bagel shop. That's what one thief decided he'd do around 1 am on May 8, slicing a hole in two fences outside the store, on Seventh Avenue near Carroll Street.

The thief entered through the back door and snatched \$1,000 from the cash register and lock-box. He also saddled the store's owners with \$2,000 in likely repair bills at the popular bagelry, police said.

**Lowe's gets 'em**  
Lowe's, the home-improvement superstore on Second Avenue, stopped a pair of carpet thieves on May 13, according to police, who arrested the two on grand larceny charges.

A week earlier, a purse-snatcher scored a pocketbook from a shopping cart next to the store, which is at the Gowanus Canal end of 12th Street, police said. Store representatives didn't return a call for comment on either crime.

The latest incident involved two would-be robbers who used a box-cutter to clip the price tags from three rolls of carpet and walked out of the store without paying around 2:30 pm. An employee who witnessed the carpet caper followed the perps into the parking lot and recovered the rugs, valued at \$1,366.

Police charged a 30-year-old man and a 29-year-old woman.

But on May 7, someone snatched a bag with credit cards, \$40, a Blackberry and other personal items from a shopping cart. This time the victim was a 35-year-old woman perusing the superstore's aisles around noon.

**Closet raided**

A Third Street resident believes sticky-fingered painters removed high-end electronics worth thousands from his home off Seventh Avenue, police said.

The wall-décor artists

## POLICE BLOTTER

worked from April 24 through early May, police said. At 8:30 pm on May 7, the 35-year-old victim discovered the valuables missing from a bedroom closet.

The disappearing items included a personalized Canon digital camera inscribed, "Congratulations from your friends at MIRC," a 28mm camera lens, 20MB of computer memory, a video iPod and an iPod Nano, police said.

**Boss to blame?**

Did several fights provoke a foreman to steal tools from a carpenter at a Fourth Street

construction job?

That's what the 35-year-old victim believes happened between 5:30 pm on May 11 and 8 am the following day. The man told police that someone snatched over a half-dozen power tools, valued at nearly \$2,000, from the worksite off Sixth Avenue.

The victim suggested his boss took the tools after they argued several times. The boss denied the theft to police, insisting the tools were secure when he left the site.

Prints were not available because of the mess, police said.

## COPS WILL SHARE TIPS ON SUNDAY

The Brooklyn Papers

Protect your cellphone! Hold onto that iPod!

Police from the 78th Precinct will be at the Fifth Avenue fair on Sunday to help Brooklynites with both these modern-day challenges, while also offering general crime-prevention tips.

Officers will staff a table near Fourth Street where they will help visitors mark their digital music devices and phones. They will also be registering bicycles. —Stainton

## Puppets parade in park

By Sharon Seitz  
for The Brooklyn Papers

A troupe of giant puppets will parade around Prospect Park on Sunday to celebrate spring and all that is good.

And just how do puppets parade around the park? With the help of you and your kids of course!

The New York Puppeteers Cooperative, a group that performs free outdoor performances around town, invites families to become puppeteers for a day.

Everyone who wants to join the procession gets to carry one of the cooperative's bigger-than-life puppets.

The parade begins at 1 pm at the top of the Long Meadow.

To join, call (718) 853-7350.

Sharon Seitz is author of "The Urban Park Rangers Guide to Nature in New York."



A puppet at last year's annual Puppet Parade in Prospect Park.

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<small>Thirty sliced onions, melted cheese, tomato sauce, and choice of cheese served with French fries and choice of sides</small>	<b>Lo-Carb Chicken or Steak Combo</b> ..... \$8.95
<b>Lo-Carb Chicken Platter</b> ..... \$7.50	<b>Lo-Carb Chicken or Steak Combo</b> ..... \$8.95
<small>Thirty sliced onions, melted cheese, tomato sauce, and choice of cheese served with French fries and choice of sides</small>	<b>Lo-Carb Chicken or Steak Combo</b> ..... \$8.95

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# Ridge's Nordic queen is AWOL

By Dana Rubinstein  
The Brooklyn Papers

There she isn't... Miss Norway.

Thanks to a stunning shortage of Viking descendants, the venerable Miss Norway of Greater New York pageant has been cancelled — meaning that this Sunday's 52nd annual Norwegian-American 17th of May Parade in Bay Ridge will have no sash-wearing, tiara-topped queen riding up Fifth Avenue in a convertible.

"It's sad," said Josephine Beckmann, district manager of Community Board 10. "It's going to be a emptier without Miss Norway."

The fault, as Shakespeare said, lies not in our stars, but in our selves. Norwegian-American population in Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights has shrunk so dramatically that finding eager contestants has become as difficult as finding a bowl of fish pudding. Of course, it wasn't always that way.

"At one time, Bay Ridge was all Norwegian," said Ken Johnson, chair of the parade committee. "Eighth Avenue was known as 'Lapskaus Boulevard,'" a reference to a beloved Norwegian salted meat stew.

In 1940, nearly 35,000 Norwegians or Norwegian descendants lived in Brooklyn, mostly in Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights.

Now, according to the 2000 Census, there are only 2,900. The numbers are bad enough, but when you add in poor marketing and inflexible rules, you get a perfect storm of pageant problems, say organizers.

Three distant descendants of Vikings did sign up this



Miss Norway 2005, Karen Freely.

year — but they were turned away because the rules state that at least five contestants are needed for the show to go on.

In its heyday, the Miss Norway contest was nothing short of a Miss America pageant (for Brooklyn Norwegians, that is).

Laila Jensen, chair of the pageant and a runner-up Miss Norway in 1987, said more than 25 women competed in her year. She still relishes her reign, which culminated in her appearance in the independence day parade.

The winner is typically chosen by a panel of high-profile Norwegian-Americans, like NBC's Jane Hansen.

And it's not all about buxom blondes.

"It's not a beauty contest," said Jensen. "It's based on being proud of your heritage."

Contestants need at least one Norwegian grandparent (although it doesn't hurt to look good in a tankini).

Organizers hope that this is only a temporary setback to a great Brooklyn tradition.

"I hope that people will miss having Miss Norway in the parade this year so much, that they will participate next year and encourage this promotion of our heritage," said Jensen.

After all, "What will people be cheering for" without Miss Norway, she asked? Perhaps some tasty spretstekt lok?

The 52nd annual Norwegian-American 17th of May Parade will kick off this Sunday, May 21, at 1:30 pm at Fifth Avenue and 89th Street in Bay Ridge. Marchers will walk to Leif Erikson Park.

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Last of her kind? Karen Freely, the last Miss Norway (above, with tiara) surrounded by her admirers and Kings Point cadets. Sunday's Norwegian independence day parade in Bay Ridge will have no Miss Norway because of a lack of interest.

ence day parade.

The winner is typically chosen by a panel of high-profile Norwegian-Americans, like NBC's Jane Hansen.

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## BROOKLYN BRIEFS



# Brooklyn to Hillary: War is hell

The Brooklyn Papers

A Bay Ridge liberal Democratic club has rained on Sen. Hillary Clinton's coronation parade, endorsing an obscure rival because of Clinton's pro-war stance.

Brooklyn Democrats for Change endorsed longshot, anti-war candidate Jonathan Tasini instead of Clinton, in a vote last week.

"We wanted to send her a message that we want an anti-war candidate," said Pierre Lehu, a club vice-president.

Tasini has that one issue covered.

"The war is the reason I got into the race," Tasini said. "But if you put my positions in one column and hers in another, and take away the names, the majority of Democratic primary voters would choose me."

Tasini said that he also differs from the hawkish former First Lady on capital punishment (he opposes it), free trade (he opposes it), a single-payer universal health plan (he wants it) and criminalizing flag-burning (he opposes it).

As the election (this year's Senate vote and the presidential vote in two years) nears, Clinton is staking out a more middle-of-the-road profile, critics say. (Clinton's campaign declined to comment.)

"She criticizes the Bush administration — but only sometimes," Lehu said. "Our membership wants a true progressive."

Still, Lehu admitted that the endorsement of Tasini is hardly the snub heard 'round the world.

"I don't think Hillary will be all that concerned by it," he said.

But who knows? One night after Lehu's club slapped Hillary, the Village Independent Democrats also endorsed Tasini over Clinton.

Et tu, Manhattan?

— Gersh Kuntzman

# Walentas: Call my new condo 'House of D'



The Brooklyn Papers

Some of the richest tenants in Brooklyn would share a sub-basement with the borough's meanest thugs under a developer's bold proposal for a new Brooklyn House of Detention (left).

DUMBO developer Jed Walentas wants to knock down the existing House of D and build two new towers on the Atlantic Avenue site — one for tenants and the other for inmates.

"It would be more efficient for a private developer to come in and just rebuild the whole site," Walentas told The Brooklyn Papers.

For the project to be profitable, Walentas would need to build a second residential tower on the same foundation, he said.

Walentas, best known for his posh DUMBO real estate, compared his Big House plan to his company's Court House building, a 32-unit apartment complex a block away that shares a foundation with the new Dodge YMCA.

And he doesn't think his ritzy tenants would mind their unsavory neighbors.

"Do you know, or care, who you share a foundation with?" Walentas asked.

The city Department of Corrections has said it will double the capacity of the jail by building a new annex in the back.

The jail could reopen as early as this fall.

Despite its lowly status, the jail has become a hot commodity for developers. Michael Burke, director of the Downtown Brooklyn Council, said Walentas is not the only builder to inquire about the site.

Area residents want to see the shuttered, 11-story jail stay closed, despite a Department of Corrections plan to include neighbor-friendly retail on the Atlantic Avenue-facing ground floor.

A Corrections spokesman declined to comment on the Walentas proposal.

"There are a number of options being explored," he said.

— Ariella Cohen

# Bike path restored a year after fatality

The Brooklyn Papers

A rutted bike path whose disrepair caused the death of a lifelong Bay Ridgite has completed the first lap of a \$12-million restoration.

The Shore Parkway bike path — one of only three greenways in Brooklyn — has been converted from a pothole-riddled obstacle course into a smooth conduit from 92nd Street to the Verazzano-Narrows Bridge. The remainder of the waterfront path — from 69th to 92nd streets — will be rehabilitated by the beginning of July.

The Parks Department, which maintains the path, was blamed last year after

Keith Alexander Bonanno, 41, a body artist and rock guitarist, lost control and hit his head on the guardrail, suffering a fatal blow.

The path has been closed since last summer for emergency repairs, which were funded with grants from Rep. Vito Fossella (R-Bay Ridge) and state Sen. Marty Golden (R-Bay Ridge).

While many residents are thrilled that the repairs are almost finished, others wish the improvements had been made years ago.

"The maintenance of that particular path had not been so great," said David Smetman, bicycle campaign coordinator for Transportation Alternatives.

"People put [bike paths] in and just sort of neglect them. And then it costs millions to replace, rather than hundreds of thousands to maintain."

The late cyclist's mother agrees.

"A little late, isn't it?" said Barbara Bonanno. "It took my son's life to get it done."

— Dana Rubinstein



# Vandalized frogs haven't croaked

The Brooklyn Papers

Two vandalized frogs in Windsor Terrace's Cuite Park will get reconstructive surgery after last week's vicious beating.

Parks officials said.

The frogs (one pictured above), beloved by kids of all ages, were attacked — apparently with a hammer — in what fans of the park are calling a senseless act.

"Who would take a ball-peen hammer to a cement frog? I'm livid," said one parent, watching her pre-schooler play in the vest-pocket park at corner

of Terrace Place and 19th Street.

"And what are we supposed to tell the children?" asked another, partially in jest.

Tell them this: The frogs are on the list for emergency surgery.

"We will use a plaster/cement mix to mold and match the parts that were chipped off," said Parks spokesman Phil Abramson. "We will then either match the existing paint or repaint the frogs."

"We hope that this surgical effort will be successful so children can continue to enjoy the frogs."

— Kuntzman

# For gallery's last show, look up in the sky

The Brooklyn Papers

Appropriately, the final art show to open at the Simon Liu Gallery before it is demolished to make way for

Bruce Ratner's proposed Atlantic Yards high-rise mega-development is called "Vertical."

Liu sold the Dean Street building that housed his gallery to Ratner several months ago.

It is a real tragedy," said gallery manager Leon Kalas. "Simon's gallery had become an im-

portant gathering place for artists, and now it's all being destroyed."

The gallery will close this summer.

With Liu's space gone, Kalas

said he will continue running art shows inside Downtown real-estate offices, where he hangs art by the emerging Brooklyn artists he represents.

— Cohen

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55/Preferred Plus/Annual	\$465.00	\$735.00	\$1,345.00
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# So gallantly screaming

THE BROOKLYN  
**ANGLE** By Gersh Kuntzman

**W**HEN PRESIDENT Bush was asked last month about a newly recorded Spanish-language version of the National Anthem, he brusquely said the song "ought to be sung in English."

I'd like to think the president would have reconsidered that remark had he accompanied me to the Kings Plaza Mall last week, where several dozen English-speakers did their best to make me wish I lived in Spain, where the national anthem has no lyrics.

*Hosay kanyaceo...*

Ranking in age from 6 to 60, the singers took to the stage in hopes of landing one of 30 remaining slots that the Brooklyn Cyclones have for National Anthem singers this season. The renditions were more "American Idol" than "American Idol." And that certainly didn't please Cyclones General Manager Steve Cohen.

"We take the anthem very seriously," Cohen said. "You have no idea the kinds of complaints we get when there's a bad anthem singer. It's an important song and people want it sung properly."

*Bida doarns flylight...* Cohen's words were reverberating in my ears, but, unfortunately, they were soon drowned out by a 13-year-old named Erica. Her version of the "Star-Spangled Banner" brought to mind Henry Ford: She could hit any note you wanted, as long as you wanted B-flat.

*Waso proudlive aled...* Listening to just a few singers made it very clear why television talent shows like "American Idol" remain so popular: Everyone thinks he can sing, yet no one really can.

Most of the time, it's fun to watch people try — but when the song in question is our notoriously difficult national dirge, it's excruciating.

*Atta twilight's lastrimming...*



Seven-year-old Brownie Girl Scout Isabel Gonzalez sings "The Star Spangled Banner" during her Brooklyn Cyclones audition at the Kings Plaza shopping center.

You may think the National Anthem is a time-honored standard, but contestants sang it in virtually every musical style, from sultry R&B toulating Whitney Houston to hip-hop to the ever-unpopular Roseanne Barr version. After just 20 minutes, I couldn't help remembering the old Coke commercials: Whoever happened to that guy who offered to teach the world to sing?

*Whosbrud strypes nbrayit stans...* With so many ways to sing the anthem — and sing it badly — many listeners were left to wonder why it was such a big deal that some Hispanic crooners recorded a Spanish-language version of the song last month (after all, the Education Department translated the "Star-Spangled Banner" into Spanish in 1919 — "La bandera de las estrellas" — but who expects the Bush administration to remember such details?).

*Trew da peralis fight...* The smartest of all the performers was Bradley DeSalvo, 10, of Marine Park, who performed the anthem on his violin (at least he didn't butcher the song with his vocal chords).

*Orda rambers we watch ed...* One of the judges was WPLJ DJ Race Taylor, who, given where he works, knows something about sitting through really bad music. But after an hour or so, even Taylor could stand it no more, telling the contestants, "If you don't know the words, just keep singing, they'll come back to you."

*Whurso gallintee screaming...* Actually, not many people know the words to the National Anthem — most likely because we hear it so often that we don't even notice it anymore. Contestant Joan O'Brian compensated by bringing the lyrics along with her. And she did get every word right (now, if she could just match the lyrics up to the actual notes, she'd have something).

*Henda rockis redglaua...* O'Brian had nothing on my personal favorite singer of the night: the 14-year-old tenor who sang like a "Soprano".

*Da bombs burst trew da air...* To be fair, some people knew what they were doing. Maimma Thomas from Coney Island gave a kick-ass, deep-throated operatic rendition.

"I was in 'Eugene Onegin,' you know," she said, referring to the famous Russian opera. Thomas also confided that she knew the almost-entirely-unknown second verse of the anthem. Second verse? I'd be happy with someone who knew the second line!

*Gave proust a big knife...* There was even a court officer, in uniform, trying to win a coveted spot (the good news: he only disgraced the anthem, not his uniform).

*Data flag uss still dare...* Even a chorus from the Louis-Marshall School (which wore t-shirts proclaiming themselves the "World's Greatest Chorus") failed to, as they say, honor America with

the singing of the National Anthem, although one boy did doff his Los Angeles Dodger cap.

*Hosay dax dat star-spangled bana ya't wawe!* The singers kept coming and coming, slashing and burning their way through our patriotic hymn, and it appeared less and less likely that the Cyclones would have to lower their standards to fill their 30 slots.

*Endaho mada braypel!*

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\*\*One apple pie per family.

## P'pect Park adding WiFi

By Dana Rubinstein  
The Brooklyn Papers

Ahhh. Rolling hills, lush green grass, the intoxicating scent of lilacs... and wireless?

Yes, boot up your laptop. By the end of this summer, Prospect Park will be buzzing with wireless broadband Internet.

Other parks — including the Brooklyn Heights promenade, and Columbus, Carroll, Fort Greene, and Cobble Hill parks — will follow next year.

Parks officials said that entering the Internet age would make parks more popular and, therefore, safer. But not everyone wants to bring busy work to the city's "secular sanctuary," as Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe calls the city's public green spaces.

"I am highly ambivalent," said Park Slope author David Shenk, author of *Dans Seneg*, a cautionary tale of technology run amok. "In a way, it's kind of exciting. It's also kind of depressing."

"I think it's a part of our Age of Distraction," said Shenk, who does not own a BlackBerry, but admitted that he is shopping for one.

"The whole point of a park is to get away from it all. Now, we will obviously have no escape."

Shenk worries about having no time to think. Others worry about having no time for family.

"What it sounds like is you're not leaving the workplace," said Tanika Rivera, who runs HELP New Horizons Computer Clubhouse in East Flatbush.

"You're bringing your work home with you. And, if you're focusing on a monitor, what are you telling your kids? Speaking as a mother, once I leave work at 5:30, whatever can't get solved, gets solved the next day."

And then there's the elephant in the computer lab — will any one other than the affluent benefit from widespread wireless broadband access?

City Councilwoman Gale Brewer (D-Manhattan) alluded to that fact a few times at hearing she led this week. "The gentleman who wired St. Mary's Park (in Mott Haven, the Bronx), said that no one was bringing laptops in there," said Brewer, who chairs the technology committee.



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- Thursday, June 22 - **KeySpan Park Tins**<sup>2</sup> presented by KeySpan
- Thursday, July 6 - **Cyclones Jerseys**<sup>2</sup> presented by Maimonides Medical Center
- Saturday, July 29 - **First Aid Kits**<sup>2</sup> presented by Atlantis Health Plan
- Monday, August 7 - **Picture Frames**<sup>2</sup> presented by Ridgewood Savings Bank
- Monday, August 21 - **Hawaiian Luau Night / Sid Fernandez Appearance**
- Tuesday, August 29 - **Back to School Notebooks**<sup>2</sup> presented by Staples

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# Swamp shocker! Nets bumped by Miami Heat

Nets 100, Heat 88, May 8 at Miami • Heat 111, Nets 89, May 10 at Miami  
Heat 103, Nets 92, May 12 at E. Rutherford  
Heat 102, Nets 92, May 14 at E. Rutherford • Heat 106, Nets 105, May 16 at Miami  
Heat wins series, 4-1

By Lucky Ngamwajast  
The Brooklyn Papers

All the season's promise, all the highlight dunks by Vince Carter and Richard Jefferson, all the passes that Jason Kidd dished out came crashing down this week, as the Heat sent the Brooklyn-Bound New Jersey Nets packing for their summer vacations.

The clock is ticking on Kidd's career and he's still no closer to an NBA title, thanks to this nearly clean sweep by the Heat — the second year in a row that the Nets were eliminated by Miami.

It looked like the Nets would be much more competitive, crushing the Heat in Game 1, 100-88. Miami seemed listless on defense, turning Carter and Jefferson into free-range beasts. Shaquille O'Neal continued to have problems with the officials and got into early foul trouble — and the Nets took advantage. A 13-0 run in the third quarter sealed the game, but it proved costly, as Jefferson had to leave the game with a sprained ankle. Carter finished with a game high of 27, while



Kidd had 22 points and 9 assists.

The Heat had a reversal of fortune in Game 2, with Dwyane Wade slicing through the Net defense.

Wade's fighting quickness has garnered him the nickname "Flash" and he showed why, leading all scorers with 31 points. It was essentially over before it started, as the Heat began with a 25-4 opening. Miami set a franchise record for points in a single playoff quarter with 41 points in the first. The Nets fell 111-89.

The swamps of New Jersey have been kind to the home team this season and the last thing anyone expected was for Miami to take both games at the Meadowlands (perhaps Brooklyn will be more hospitable after all).

The Nets couldn't stop Wade, who matched basket for basket with Carter.

Wade left in the third quarter of Game 3 after being elbowed in the face, only to come back and score 15 of his 30 points in the final four minutes of the game to lift the Heat to victory. Wade also dished out 10 assists and Shaq had 19 points and 9 rebounds. Carter had 43 points in the losing effort.

The Nets received bad news before Game 4, finding out key reserve Clifford Robinson had been suspended for violating the NBA's substance abuse policy. Already with a thin bench, the Nets depth was tested severely — and learned it couldn't rise to the challenge.

Wade again dominated with another 31-point performance, while the Nets shot blanks (37 percent in the first half).

With their backs against the wall in Game 5, the Nets came out firing and got out to an 11-point first-quarter lead. But in the close out of the game, it was old nemesis Antoine Walker who killed the Swamptrappers, hitting three pointers that were like daggers into the hearts of the Jersey faithful.

The game was close until the very final stages, but with the Nets down by one, 106-105, with 1.4 seconds left, Wade knocked away a Kidd in-bound pass and, with it, the dream of a Net championship.

Two things got exposed in this series: the shallowness of the Net bench and the vulnerabilities of relying on Carter too much. Carter is a tremendous talent; there's no denying that when he's on, he's the best player on the court. But his shot selection at times is questionable.

It's gotten to the point where Richard Jefferson is starting to complain about ball distribution. The Nets need to do two things this off-season: get some big inside muscle and hire some depth. Perhaps Kevin Garnett for Carter and two draft picks?

As we say in Brooklyn, "Wait 'til next year."

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# Prime-time burglar

## 68th Precinct

By Lilo H. Stainton  
The Brooklyn Papers

Maybe the thieves were just "American Idol" fans without a TV set of their own.

Burglars stole a television from a 92nd Street doctor's office on Battery Avenue on the night of the wildly popular show, but then later dropped the 27-inch Zenith at the back door, police said.

The 52-year-old physician closed up shop around 7:15 pm on May 10. When she returned the next morning, the glass door had been broken and her office vandalized. The burglars also took \$500, but — unlike with the TV — they didn't leave the cash behind.

### iPod rob

A pair of thugs jumped a 20-year-old walking to his home on 82nd Street near Sixth Avenue moments after 9 pm on May 10, police said. The thieves snatched the man's iPod and bolted down 82nd Street before he could get a good look at them.

### Super snatch?

Burglars cleaned out the cabinetry and appliances from a Ridge Boulevard building, near 68th Street, sometime between 8 pm on May 10 and 6 pm the following day, police said.

The 46-year-old building owner told police she suspects the former superintendent, who she had evicted from the trashed building a few days earlier.

The thief got away with kitchen cabinets, a bathroom vanity, glass window and an intercom system.

### Unwelcome

Burglars trashed a 64th Street home while its residents were vacationing overseas, police said.

The pair's 38-year-old son-in-law discovered the damage at the home, near Ninth Avenue, shortly before 4 pm on May 9. The side door had been cracked open and two bedrooms ransacked, although the witness wasn't sure what was missing.

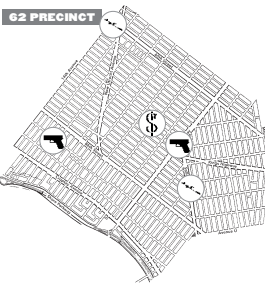
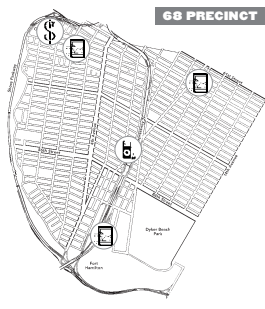
The home was secure at 4 pm on May 6.

### Bad day in park

One week after thieves stole a backpack near a Bay Ridge basketball court, someone snatched a \$1,150 ring from a bag while its owner played Frisbee nearby in Owl's Head Park.

## POLICE BLOTTER

### NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH WHERE CRIMES TOOK PLACE



### 62nd Precinct

#### Bad beef beat?

Police nabbed a courier who used fast-food, computer equipment, a mop handle and a meat cleaver to assault an employee at a 14th Avenue restaurant on May 11.

### 62nd Precinct

#### Bad beef beat?

Police nabbed a courier who used fast-food, computer equipment, a mop handle and a meat cleaver to assault an employee at a 14th Avenue restaurant on May 11.

The brouhaha began when the pair visited the drive-through at 64th Street around 11 pm. The customers became confrontational, hurling food and drink cups and computer parts through the window at the worker.

The thugs then parked their car and continued their tirade inside the restaurant. The man picked up a mop and used the handle to strike the 18-year-old victim on the left arm and forehead, leaving painful bruises. Then the female attacker started swinging a meat cleaver, lunging toward the victim.

Luckily, she never made contact. The pair fled on 14th Avenue, but police caught up with the couple — a 21-year-old man and an 18-year-old woman — and arrested them on assault charges.

### Safe at home?

A masked gunman robbed a Benson Avenue resident as he entered his building at 11 pm on May 15, police said.

The thug rushed the 27-year-old victim from behind, pointed a silver handgun at his face and forced him into the vestibule. The victim tried to grab the weapon and a scuffle broke out.

When the thief recovered the gun, he again trained it on the victim and insisted he turn over his money. But the robber decided the victim didn't have "enough" and forced him to his apartment, where the terrified man turned over \$1,300.

The robber ran off with the cash and his cellphone. The victim never saw his face.

### Mid-day heist

Police nabbed a robber who allegedly mugged a man walking on 20th Avenue on May 9.

The thug pulled a handgun when he approached the 27-year-old victim near 75th Street, around 2:30 pm, police said. He forced the victim to the ground, plucked \$700 from his pockets and ripped the chain from his neck.

But the victim saw the thief escape in a green Dodge Intrepid, which helped police track down the 26-year-old suspect, who now faces felony charges.

### Bat attack

A trio of baseball bat-wielding brutes attacked a man sitting in his van in his own driveway on West 13th Street, police said.

The teenage thugs surrounded the vehicle and smashed the driver's and passenger-side windows, then proceeded to pummel the 36-year-old victim. The man suffered cuts on his hands and the teens fled on Highland Avenue.

### Bodega heist

Two masked gunmen robbed a Stillwell Avenue grocery of \$700 on May 9, police said.

With their guns drawn, the thugs rushed the store around 11:20 pm. One man trained his weapon on the clerk and insisted he empty the register. The pair — one in a red half-mask, the other in yellow, both wearing black do-rags on their heads — then ran off.

### LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, Kings County on the 12th day of May, 2006, bearing the Index Number N050362006, a copy of which may be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at CIVIL COURT, KINGS COUNTY, 141 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201, in room 003, grants me rights to Assume the name of: Michael Dennis Aronson. My present name is: Michael Dennis Aronson. My present address is: 1372 47th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11229. My place of birth is: Ridgewood, New Jersey. My date of birth is: May 4, 1973. 8830

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, Kings County on the 12th day of May, 2006, bearing the Index Number N050362006, a copy of which may be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at CIVIL COURT, KINGS COUNTY, 141 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201, in room 003, grants me rights to Assume the name of: Fanny Paschman. My present name is: Fanny Paschman. My present address is: 1372 47th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11229. My place of birth is: Brooklyn, New York. My date of birth is: May 4, 1973. 8830

Notice is hereby given that an Order entered by the Civil Court, Kings County on the 12th day of May, 2006, bearing the Index Number N050362006, a copy of which may be examined at the Office of the Clerk, located at CIVIL COURT, KINGS COUNTY, 141 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201, in room 003, grants me rights to Assume the name of: Alan Abramson. My present name is: Alan Abramson. My present address is: 1372 47th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11229. My place of birth is: Brooklyn, New York. My date of birth is: October 21, 1968. 8830

K.C. McDaniel PLLC, Notice of Formation of Professional Limited Liability Company ("PLLC") articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of New York on May 12, 2006. Office Location: Kings County, SUNNY designated as agent of PLLC upon whom process against may be served. SUNNY shall mail process to K.C. McDaniel PLLC, 1372 47th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11229. Purpose: any lawful activities. 8830-25

Don & Mills Properties LLC, Notice of Formation of Don & Mills Properties LLC, Arts of Organization filed with Secretary of State of New York on May 12, 2006. Office Location: Kings County, SUNNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against may be served. SUNNY shall mail process to DON & MILLS PROPERTIES LLC, CATHY TERPANDORF, 2015 NORTHEAST AVENUE, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, 11210. Purpose: any lawful activities. 8830-25

Callender & Williams LLC, Notice of Formation of Callender & Williams LLC, Arts of Organization filed with Secretary of State of New York on May 12, 2006. Office Location: Kings County, SUNNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against may be served. SUNNY shall mail process to Callender & Williams LLC, Suite 302, White Plains, NY 10601. Purpose: any lawful activities. 8830-25



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# Fairway opens Red Hook store...

*Continued from page 1*

rect, whose tracks have become ubiquitous in Brownstone Brooklyn.

"[Expletive deleted]," said Glickberg. "Their prices are higher, but there's something even more important: Our shopper loves food."

"He comes in, he browses, he looks at the food, he smells it, he touches it. Maybe he was looking for broccoli, but he sees we have great Brussels sprouts, so he chooses the Brussels sprouts."

Glickberg predicted that the Red Hook Fairway would quickly become the borough's highest-volume supermarket.

It certainly offers a wide array of things to buy, from a gourmet salad bar with grilled vegetables, couscous, quinoa, dumplings and other prepared foods for \$5.95 a pound; fresh coffee beans roasted on site by Benny Lanfranco; a meat case that looks like it was designed by Dr. Atkins himself; enough varieties of olive oil to unclog every artery in Brooklyn; a cheese aisle that would make a Frenchman drool; a kosher butcher shop; ethnic specialty items; and an ocean of fresh fish.

"That's going to be worth the trip alone," said Greenpoint native Tom Gilbert, eyeing a salmon steak.

"This could possibly be the best fish market in Brooklyn. At most supermarkets, you shop for fish by choosing whatever doesn't look spoiled already."

Gilbert is notoriously finicky about his cheese, but even he snapped up a house-made Fairway mozzarella.

"If I'm going to eat mozzarella plain, I'll still go to the Italian lady in my neighborhood, but if I'm mixing it into pasta, this is more than acceptable."

## To reach Fairway, better use a car

The Brooklyn Papers

If you're heading to the new Fairway Market, you'd better keep your eye out for this vicious sinkhole on Richards Street, just west of the intersection of Van Dyke.

This ankle-deep ravine swallowed up The Papers' editor, Gersh Kuntzman, as he biked to cover the grand opening of the celebrated supermarket.

Kuntzman gracefully flew over the handlebars, smashing face first onto Richards Street, earning the help from two passersby (and a 3.6 from the East German judge). He was bloodied, but unbowed, and continued to the store to do his job. The pothole emerged unscathed.

Once at Fairway, Kuntzman ran into city Department of Transportation Commissioner Iris Weinsahl, a Park Slope neighbor.

The commish was surprisingly unsympathetic to the swollen scribe.

"Well," she said, "this is an industrial neighborhood."

—Chester Hawkins



Items at Fairway include fresh salmon steaks (\$6.99 per pound), organic, fair-trade coffee (\$7.99 per pound) and Brooklyn Lager (\$7.29).

Gina Mileo of Park Slope was in a similar bind.

A sausage fanatic, she makes a weekly pilgrimage to Faicco's pork store at 65th Street and 11th Avenue in Dyker Heights — but one taste of Fairway's sweet Italian made her a guilty convert.

"It surprised me how good it was," she said. "I'll still go to Faicco's — they're the best — but not as often."

Some customers complained that the hard-to-reach store, which sits at the end of Van Brunt Street, is accessible only by car (see sidebar).

The store has lined up weekend ferry service from Manhattan and will run a free shuttle to and from a Carroll Gardens senior center every Wednesday.

One shopper at the busy Key Food on Fifth Avenue in Park Slope — which has its own parking lot — said he would undoubtedly shop at Fairway occasionally, just as he sometimes treks to the giant Shop Rite on McDonald Avenue, but prefers to shop locally, where a car is not necessary and where the prices are competitive.

Glickberg conceded that accessibility is an issue, but was confident that "everyone who owns a car — or has a friend who owns a car — will shop here."



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## ORACLE...

*Continued from page 1*

stowed upon me at birth and it would be wrong not to share it."

The Oracle promptly hung up, saying it needed to "catch a plane."

Back on Flatbush Avenue, Pintchik was showing off the device to passer-by Henry Nelson, who grabbed the receiver.

Is Brooklyn going to be too expensive for me to live in?" Nelson shouted (after all, Flatbush Avenue is extremely loud and incredibly close to the phone).

Pintchik chimed in. "You don't need a freakin' Oracle to know the answer to that one."

Nelson, of course, wanted to know how the system works. Many have speculated that the soothsayer is in a nearby office, reading questioners' lips. Others have suggested that the Oracle is like a Magic 8-Ball, merely recycling the same tired, mysterious fortune-teller platitudes.

"How it works is a miracle of modern Brooklyn," Pintchik said. (Whatever the answer is, pay no attention to those holes in the pedestal of the phone!)

At least one regular Oracle questioner, Borough President Markowitz, can't wait until Saturday.

"I welcome the mystical Oracle back to Flatbush Avenue and commend him or her — and the Pintchik family — for fulfilling Brooklynites' needs, whether they need new nails or have a few screws loose," he said.

## LIBRARY BOSS...

*Continued from page 1*

was probably helped along by the cool reception she's received from many in Brooklyn.

Cooper has been roundly criticized by community leaders for taking an extra six weeks of vacation time — she ultimately had to repay the library \$27,000.

In addition, she was accused of over-reacting when she temporarily closed a Brownsville branch after a staffer's picnic was snipped in an accidental door slam.

And she planned an international "fact-finding" trip that would've taken her and an entourage to visit state-of-the-art libraries in Singapore and Hong Kong. The trip would have cost more than \$3,200 per person.

But as her departure grows near, everyone is playing nice.

"I think that she has made a contribution," said Lucille Thomas, a former president of the board, who harshly criticized Cooper for the proposed fact-finding trip.

"She is leaving on her own, and I wish her more success."

A Brooklyn Public Library publicist credited Cooper with spearheading the "Brooklyn Reads to Babies" program, and overseeing the central library's plaza and auditorium restoration, which will be completed by next year.

The District of Columbia Public Library confirmed Cooper's appointment on Thursday. The DC system has 27 branches in Brooklyn, Cooper was the head of the Multnomah County Library in Oregon.

It is unclear when Cooper will leave. She was "unavailable for comment," a spokeswoman said.

A replacement for Cooper has not yet been selected.

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## ORCHIDS...

*Continued from page 1*

meaning Ludlum would have better luck if the orchids were native to New York.

"It's hard to know what kind of [federal] protections there could be for an international plant," said Edward Grace, senior special agent for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Neighbors know Ludlum as "the orchid man" and recognize his apartment by the orange glow his high-intensity greenhouse lights send out of the battered old factory.

His quirky connection to his neighborhood goes beyond his crops.

Ludlum was in DUMBO on 9-11, and, as he watched the World Trade Center collapse, took a photograph that ended up on the cover of The New York Times and won him a Pulitzer Prize.

If his endangered species lawsuit doesn't work, Ludlum has a fallback plan: He's also planning to sue Kotowitz on the grounds that the plans he's filed with the Department of Buildings show a development that is larger than the law allows.

Kotowitz's architect, Robert Scharoun, is currently under investigation for allegedly ignoring such zoning rules.

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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

May 20, 2006

# Awash in 'Sunshine'

## BAM-Sundance partnership kicks off with a laff riot, party

By Lisa J. Curtis  
GO Brooklyn Editor

Ever since Glenn Close put a bug in GO Girl's ear about an upcoming collaboration between the Sundance Institute and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, she has been positively mixing martinis in anticipation. The organizations' joint press conference earlier this year, which confirmed the impending birth of this indie love child, further ratcheted up the excitement with its vague overview delivered by no less than Institute President Robert Redford himself.

At the mere mention of Sundance, GO Girl's head usually fills with lavish photos of spreads of indie film stars wearing



Ugg boots and fur-trimmed hats through the snowy streets of Park City, Utah. But the filmmakers and other industry folk were able to leave their woollens at home on May 11 — the opening night of the "Sundance Institute at BAM" series — when Bob returned to lend the warmth of his shining star to our very own Fort Greene.

"Most of the filmmakers who come through [the Sundance Institute Filmmakers] lab are from here," said Redford, celebrating the already-existing bond between Park City and Brooklyn.

In true rebel style, the "Sundance Institute at BAM" organizers kicked off their series of movies, panel discussions and concerts with a film from the 2006 fest that was not universally loved by the critics: "Little Miss Sunshine." [GO Girl nearly dropped her ushi when she read the following from Dennis Lim in The Village Voice: "The series opens with its most obvious display of clout: 'Little Miss Sunshine,' the biggest sale in Sundance history and a cuddled antidote of the festival's favorite genre, the dysfunctional-family road trip."] Starting this new venture with a movie that appeared to rattle a few critics seemed a risky, radical move, but any pre-screening anxiety GO Girl may have had about suffering through "Little Miss Sunshine" was immediately smoothed away by the Grey Goose lemon drop martinis that

were distributed to the guests as they entered the BAM Rose Cinemas.

Happily those sugar-rimmed 'tini glasses heralded a night of sweet surprises for GO Girl and the sprinkling of naysayers.

First of all, the film is hysterical. Laughing until she cried at the antics of stars Alan Arkin, Steve Carell, Toni Collette, Greg Kinnear and talented 'tween Abigail Breslin, GO Girl's enthusiasm was only surpassed by her seat-neighbor Danny Simmons, who confessed that he really needed these laughs.

"Sunshine" chronicles the story of a normal — er, dysfunctional — family, replete with a drug-addicted grandpa (Arkin) and suicidal uncle (Carell). The clan goes on a desperate road trip in a dilapidated Volkswagen bus in order to get

to their young daughter (Breslin) to a beauty pageant on time. (GO Girl wondered how screenwriter Michael Arndt got a hold of her childhood journals.)

Before and after the screening, Little Miss Sunshine mixed and mingled with partygoers, including Patricia Clarkson.

The star of "Good Night and Good Luck" told GO Girl that she thought "Sunshine" was "fabulous, incredibly funny and poignant. It moved between the light and dark so effortlessly."

Clarkson said she turned out for the opening night to show her support for the Sundance Institute.

"I was named 'the Queen of Sundance,'" said the flaxen-haired beauty, recalling that one year she had four films in the festival.

Screenwriter Arndt now lives in San Francisco, but told GO Girl that he's hanging on to the East Williamsburg apartment where he wrote his black comedy.

Arndt said that he had written the film with the intention of directing it, too.

"It's a lesson in the virtues of cowardice," he said, happy with the job that filmmakers Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Farris did with his script. "They made it much better."

Farris, a resident of LA, told GO Girl that



Leading ladies: (Above) Star of "Little Miss Sunshine," Abigail Breslin, is joined by the "Queen of Sundance," Patricia Clarkson at the opening night of the "Sundance Institute at BAM" series on May 11. (Inset) Kenneth Brecher, executive director of the Sundance Institute, is embraced by Brooklyn Academy of Music's Executive Producer Joseph Melillo.

she was initially "scared and nervous about the New York crowd," but was happy to report she was gratified by the audience's reaction to the film she and Dayton labored over for five years. (For those who weren't invited to the screening, Farris said "Sunshine" will be released by Fox Searchlight on July 26.)

Although this is their first feature film, Dayton and Farris are not new to the field. They've been filming music videos and commercials for decades.

"We love working with eccentric artists," said Farris. "[The actors] were great to work with — very talented people." Now that their labor of love has a distributor, Farris and Dayton are concentrating on their next project: shooting the Red Hot Chili Peppers' music video for "Tell Me Baby," from the recently released double album, "Stadium Arcadium."

Also spotted networking their way through the soiree — which spanned two floors of BAM — were designer Kenneth Cole, writer-director Byron Hurt (whose "Beyond Beats and Rhymes: A Hip-Hop Head Weighs in on Manhood in Hip-Hop Culture" screens at BAM on May 21 at 6:30 pm), actress Cara Seymour ("The Notorious Bettie Page," "American Psycho"), "The Forgiven" writer-director Paul Fitzgerald

(whose flick screens May 20 at 6:30 pm) and home improvement guru Bob Vila (who served on the Sundance at BAM host committee).

The opening night eventually wound down, but the Sundance party is far from over. The series continues through Sunday, with a grand finale on May 21. GO Girl added a 9 pm screening of "Sherrybaby" — Brooklynite Laurie Collyer's flick starring Maggie Gyllenhaal — to her PDA, along with a 2 pm panel discussion between directors Allison Anders ("Gas Food Lodging"), Hal Hartley ("The Unbelievable Truth"), David O. Russell ("I Heart Huckabees"), John Waters ("Hairspray"), and film critic Janet Maslin.

Still giggling over "Little Miss Sunshine," GO Girl and the other invitees happily scooped up their gift bags.

Although they didn't contain glossies autographed by the "Way We Were" hunk, they did have vodka and Sundance Channel T-shirts that pleaded: "Change Your Coast."

But GO Girl likes her coast just fine: whether she's enjoying "shots" on the beach in Coney Island or inside The River Cafe. And that's a wrap! Hiccup!

For a complete schedule of "Sundance Institute at BAM" events, visit [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org).

## HOME

## Minty fresh

If you didn't sate your craving for contemporary design at last weekend's "Brooklyn Designs," another fix can be had at the third annual "Altoids Living Spaces," beginning this Saturday.

Curated by Jason Miller and Dave Alhadeff, owner of The Future Perfect in Bilyburg, this year's exhibit showcases designs by four-dozen companies including redstr+collective, The Design Can and Hivemindesign in the Williamsburg salon/sur Supreme Trading.

Artist Karim Rashid (pictured) — whose 3-D computer graphic art is featured in the 2005 Taschen monograph, "Digipop" — will choose one "Living Spaces" designer to receive the Altoids Curiously Strong Designer Award.

"Living Spaces" will be on display May 20, 23, from noon to 6 pm, at Supreme Trading [213 N. Eighth St. between Driggs and Roebing streets in Williamsburg, (718) 599-4224]. A viewing party will be held May 22, from 9 pm to 2 am with free booze offered from 10 pm to 11 pm. The exhibition and party are free and open to the public.

— Lisa J. Curtis

## MUSIC

## It's electric!

An opportunity to see a performance inside the Old American Can Factory — a century-old, 130,000-square-foot manufacturing and arts complex by the Gowanus Canal, is being offered by XO Projects this month.

From May 24-27, XO Projects presents the chamber opera "Rural Electrification" in the complex's "Sanctum." Elizabeth Brown's composition for recorded sound, voice and Theremin (Leon Theremin's analog electronic instrument, whose sound is rampant in old Vincent Price flicks) will be performed by Brown and Stephanie Skaff, against Lothar Osterburg's video projection.

"Elizabeth's clear visual ideas for the piece was what ultimately inspired me to collaborate in what was at first started as a purely musical piece," Osterburg told GO Brooklyn. Brown's opera explores the effects of the advent of electricity on a young woman living in rural America.

Married since 2004, Osterburg and Brown first partnered on a 12-minute long video, "Watermusic," in 2005.

"Her music has always inspired me, and my art has been inspirational for her," said Osterburg. "She is one of my biggest fans!"

"Rural Electrification" will be performed May 24-27 at 8 pm in The Sanctum of The Old American Can Factory (232 Third St. at Third Avenue in Gowanus). Tickets are \$15, \$10 seniors and students with ID. For reservations and information, e-mail [xoprc@gmail.com](mailto:xoprc@gmail.com). — LIC

## MUSIC

## 'Sweet' music

The Grammy Award-winning Brooklyn Youth Chorus will perform its 14th season's offering of world premieres composed especially for students attending New York City's only voice-based after-school music academy.

The "Sweet Songs of Youth" program will be performed May 20 in Long Island University's Kumble Theater. The commissioned works are from a trio of musicians: renowned jazzman Fred Hersch, new music pioneer Nico Muhly (pictured) and Broadway tunesmith Andrew Lippa.

Hersch's "Please Smile," for four-part chorus, bass and electric guitar, is an homage to two of Hersch's favorite vocal groups: Earth Wind and Fire and Take 6. Muhly's "The Sweets of Evening," for four-part chorus and piano, takes advantage of the textures of ever-changing children's voices.

"Hope," for three-part chorus and piano, is Lippa's first foray into choral writing for a children's group.

Works ranging from the baroque (J.S. Bach) to the 20th century (Bela Bartok) are also on the program, which is led by the group's founder, Dianne Berken. Before the concert, Brooklyn Philharmonic Director of Education Ted Wiprud moderates a discussion with the world-premiere composers.

The Brooklyn Youth Chorus performs new works by Hersch, Muhly and Lippa on May 20 at 7:30 pm at the Kumble Theater on LIU's Brooklyn campus, Flatbush Avenue Extension at DeKalb Avenue in Downtown Brooklyn. Tickets — \$17 (general admission), \$35 (preferred seating) and \$70 (VIP seating and post-concert reception) — are available at [www.kumbletheater.org](http://www.kumbletheater.org) or by calling (718) 488-1624. For more information, visit [www.brooklynouthchorus.org](http://www.brooklynouthchorus.org).

— Kevin Filipski

## She loves rock 'n' roll

On May 9, punk rock idol Joan Jetz (left) journeyed to a Red Hook club, The Hook, to tape the video for her new single, "A.C.D.C.," off her forthcoming Blackheart Records CD, "Stimac." Carmen Electra (right) — who told us she's "a longtime Jetz fan" — was also at the taping, playing an appropriately kitchy role in the film version of the gender-bending love song.



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# BROOKLYN Neighborhood Dining Guide

**This week:  
BENSONHURST**

## Casa Calamari

1801 Bath Ave. at 18th Avenue, (718) 234-7060, [www.casacalamari.biz](http://www.casacalamari.biz), (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$7-\$22.50.

Since opening its doors to Brooklyn in 1999, Casa Calamari has been known to "satisfy all its patrons," manager John Lahera told GO Brooklyn. Owner Rocco Loccasio named three of his 16 specialty brick oven pizzas after his sons: the "Francesco" pie, for example, is topped with shrimp, sautéed arugula and crushed garlic. Or, choose any of 15 toppings to customize your own pie. Loccasio's menu also features pasta dishes like "rigatoni fritto di pomodoro," in which their rigatoni is topped with a fire tomato sauce made with prosciutto and onion. Then finish your meal with Rosie Varella's homemade tiramisu. On Tuesdays, Casa Calamari has their "shrimp fest": 30 shrimp — fried or scampi style — are prepared to order, served over pasta with soup or salad for only \$15.95. If you prefer lobster, Wednesday is "Crazy Lobster Night," when you can get a one and one-quarter-pound lobster prepared steamed, with marinara sauce or stuffed and baked, with soup or salad for \$17.95. On weekends, a lunch special is offered, with a choice of sandwich, soup and salad plus fountain soda for \$6.50. But wait! Casa Calamari offers more: a boasts free live entertainment every Saturday. DJ Mike will have you bumping off those calories with his impersonations of "Cuban Pete," "I Love Lucy" and much, much more! Open daily for lunch and dinner.

## Casa Pepe

114 Bay Parkway at 69th Street, (718) 833-8865, [www.casapepe.com](http://www.casapepe.com) (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$12-\$25.

The courtly Spanish and Mexican-style of Casa Pepe will leave a smile on your face as it takes you to your heart. Since its start in 1980, James Sans, a native Spaniard, has been serving Mexican favorites, like fajitas, chenchingans and "enchiladas poblanas" — soft corn tortillas filled with chicken, mole poblano sauce, "fresco" cheese and avocado slices. Sans's "flautas banderas" is a pan-fried, tri-colored corn tortilla filled with shredded skirt steak and served with beans, rice, guacamole and sour cream.

But wait, there's Spanish cuisine here, too! Chef Miguel Garcia serves up "paella Valenciana" (clams, shrimp, mussels, chicken and Spanish sausage served with saffron rice, "langosta rellena" (Maine lobster stuffed with lump crabmeat and shrimp served with vegetables of the day), and, of course, the traditional "arroz con pollo." Casa Pepe also has an elegant party room that can accommodate 120 guests. Open Wednesday-Monday for lunch and dinner, and Sunday brunch, from noon to 4 p.m. Garden seats available in season. Closed on Tuesdays.

## Dale Bagels

6201 18th Ave. at 62nd Street, (718) 232-0132, (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$1-\$9.

Paul Dispirito's delicatessen serves bagels, homemade salads, sandwiches, and a variety of breakfast wraps and specials. There are omelets and bacon from the grill, and a foot brick oven heros such as fried eggplant with fresh mozzarella, arugula, plum tomato, oil and vinegar, or homemade tuna with grilled onions. Desserts include apple turnovers, rice pudding, cinnamon buns, and croissants with strawberry, cheese, chocolate or luscious fillings. What about salads? What about soups? You ask? They are hand-dipped and kettle-broiled the old-fashioned way, says Dispirito, and come in 13 varieties, plus mini bagels. A dozen bagels (made fresh eight to 10 times daily) costs \$6.99, and don't forget to pick up a pint of your favorite spread, from lox to vegetable cream cheese to fat-free tofu spread. While there are no tables inside the deli, there is terrace seating, weather permitting. Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner until midnight, and all night on Fridays and Saturdays.

**Lioni Latticini, Inc.**  
7803 15th Ave. at 78th Street, (718) 232-1166 (AmEx, Disc, Visa) Entrees: \$8-\$14.

Named after a small town in the hills of Italy, Lioni

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Andrea Cerasuoli, owner of Ortobello (6401 Bay Parkway), holding "pollo prato" in Rome.

Latticini, Inc. has been manufacturing cheeses in the U.S. for 25 years, distributing in gourmet fresh mozzarella to over 35 cities nationally each week. In 1996 the Salzano family of cheesemakers opened their warehouse to retail trade, and this outlet has since grown into a full service deli, with a full line of Italian cheeses including the prized "bubala" mozzarella, made from the milk of the water buffalo. The deli serves up creatively named "Italian heroes," including the "Robert Deniro: Fry This Ragout Bull" (pepper bars, Swiss cheese, tomato and mayonnaise), and the "Vince Lombardi: This Needs No Coaching" (roasted peppers, fresh mozzarella, green pesto sauce, a drizzle of olive oil and black pepper). The sandwiches are huge: take the "Al Pacino," with a chicken cutlet, ham, seven cheeses and stuffed peppers, all dressed with a pigtail, last minute and balsamic vinegar. It weighs in at two and a half pounds, says manager Robert Carluccio, and costs \$13. Lioni's also offers homemade salads, soups and a wide selection of desserts, from tartufo to tiramisu. Carluccio says his Mom does most of the cooking, along with "another Italian lady." There are no tables inside the deli but terrace seating, with umbrellas, is an option in warm weather. Catering menu also available. Open daily until 6 p.m.

## Mona Lisa Bakery & Restaurant

1476 86th St. at 15th Avenue, (718) 837-9053, [www.monalisabakery.com](http://www.monalisabakery.com) (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$8.95-\$11.50.

Mona Lisa has been making handmade breads, cookies, cakes and pastries for over three generations; the traditional Italian breads like the prosciutto-laced "lard" bread are baked in a coal-fired oven. Owned by Steven Camerata, Mona Lisa has everything from their chocolate-covered cannoli (a sumptuous twist on the traditional cannoli — they're hand-dipped in dark chocolate from Switzerland) to their Amaretto cookies (made with an imported almond paste and delicate Amaretto liqueur). Their enormous paninis come with over 30 combinations of fillings, such as a grilled chicken with fontina cheese and mushrooms, or prosciutto, mozzarella and roasted peppers. There are also European-style thin crust pizzas, brick oven baked with a variety of cheeses and toppings. The interior of Mona Lisa, with its marble-top tables, full bar, gelatos and sorbets will make you think you're in a cafe in Rome. Mona Lisa even makes their own wedding cakes, and they ship their baked goods nationwide. They are open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner, until 10 p.m.

## Ortobello

6401 Bay Parkway at 64th Street, (718) 236-9810, [www.ortobellorestaurant.com](http://www.ortobellorestaurant.com), (Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$12-\$22.50.

Having emigrated from Naples more than 30 years ago, this restaurant's owners still serve the kind of Neapolitan cuisine that would make their ancestors proud. Among the pasta, seafood and meat dishes, diners will find a selection of Italian treats such as a baked artichoke "corgonata," stuffed with bread crumbs, garlic and seasonings, or the chicken "cappriccio," a chicken cutlet topped with diced tomatoes, red onions and balsamic vinegar. For dessert, owner Andrea Cerasuoli recommends the homemade ricotta cheesecake or a selection from their menu of imported sweets. Open daily for dinner.

Editor's note: These are a sampling of restaurants in the neighborhood. The list rotates, and it is not comprehensive. For more restaurants, go to [www.brooklynpapers.com](http://www.brooklynpapers.com) on the Web. If your restaurant is not listed and you would like to be, please contact GO Brooklyn Editor Lisa Curtis via e-mail at [Curtis@BrooklynPapers.com](mailto:Curtis@BrooklynPapers.com).

# Slush splash

*Vellus offers big flavor, tiny plates*

By Tina Barry  
for The Brooklyn Papers

If a focus group of young professionals living in Fort Greene were asked to describe an ideal neighborhood dining spot, the participants would come up with someplace like Vellus.

They'd dream up proprietors like Kicca Berre and Misha Chiporukha, an attractive couple who cater to regulars and newcomers with equal warmth. Vellus, which opened in 2003, is their first entrepreneurial effort.

The team created an enormously appealing space with a view of Fulton Street. The big rectangular room has the earmarks of a French bistro with a brick wall, gilt-framed mirror and comfortable wooden tables and benches. It's spare yet warm, comfortably intimate but not confining.

Atop a wall above the open kitchen, there's a screen where black-and-white subtitled movies play soundlessly throughout dinner. It's an amusing touch that appeals to the crowd.

The name, according to the restaurant's pr, "is based on the Latin 'Vellus,' meaning 'pleasure found through all that is rare and exquisite.' The two 'i's' transform the 'me' into 'we.' The 'w' being the owners and the community."

Marcus Olson (formerly of the Cumberford Hotel in London) was hired in November to serve as the executive chef. His well-written menu of French and Italian fare is enticing. Who wouldn't want to taste braised short ribs with chocolate-tinged "espagnole" sauce? Or lusty pappardelle with porcini mushrooms, mascarpone cheese and shaved wild truffles? And can anything be more alluring to a carnivore than Angus steak with "pommes frites" and bone marrow reduction?

Olson's menu writing is well honed; what emerges from the kitchen, though, could use editing. Take a starter of crisply sautéed, prosciutto-covered scallops. They're salty on the outside with a moist, briny center — and very rich. Accompanying them is a dollop of pearsauce, which is a dollop of pearsauce-mousse with a touch of sweetness. Separately, each partner is delicious; together they're overkill. A little circle of shaved asparagus and

dabs of sweet saffron sauce are superfluous.

I have a similar objection to a salad of roasted beets. The thick slices of the earthy vegetables, splashed with a bit of chive-goat cheese sauce and paired with greens dressed with a slightly sweet beet vinaigrette, have enough going on for one dish, but an unctuous asparagus mousse crowds the plate.

The smoked trout terrine is on the ornate side too, but all the elements in this stack of moist fish — layered between well-seasoned soft discs

of potatoes; pieces of tart, braised escarole; and bits of creamy goat cheese — harmonized.

Lots of components need a suitable base to sit upon, which brings me to the food's presentation. If a restaurant focuses on small-plate dining, where there's no set first, second and third course, then serving each dish on the same size plate is acceptable. If an eatery has a standard appetizer, entree and dessert format, like Vellus, then the starter should be plated on a smallish dish, the entree served on a larger plate and dessert on a little dish for practical reasons: the biggest plate signals the most important course and its size allows for a generous serving of food.

At Vellus, everything appears on appetizer-sized plates, while the entree problem: many entree components piled precariously on an undersized plate makes for messy dining.

One of the simpler entrees of pork loin with warm apple-fennel salad, for instance, needs to be cut carefully to avoid splashing a light sherry-laced sauce.

On a larger plate, splatters wouldn't be an issue. Otherwise, the meat glazed with mustard and flavored with lavender is boldly seasoned, with the herb lending an arresting floral note.

I like slices of rare tuna dusted with ground porcini mushrooms, too, but the melange of broccolini rabe, slivers of asparagus, wild mushrooms and cannellini beans taste flat.

I'd re-think the warm banana cheesecake. There's too much fruit, not enough cheese and the preparation doesn't work. Olson rolls the filling in a crust and fries it. It's served in large,



**Appetizers galore:** At Vellus in Fort Greene, Chef Marcus Olson serves up prosciutto-wrapped sea scallops with pearsauce-mousse, shaved asparagus and sweet saffron. (Below) The dining room has an open kitchen and a movie screen.



diagonally cut pieces over very good, vanilla-laced cream anglaise.

The crust is crisp without being tasty, and the filling edges into baby-food territory.

As lovely as the honey-lavender cream butter sauce, it's dense, not creamy.

The sophisticated clientele that Vellus attracts looks for a bistro that serves familiar dishes with some flair. Generous helpings at reasonable prices are important, too. My guess is they'd still be pleased if Olson took a less-is-more approach to food pairing and cut back a bit on portions, a change that would make his dishes more appealing.

Employing larger entree plates wouldn't hurt either. When they're concerned, the bigger they better.

# Lookin' for love

When you find yourself asking, "Where's the love?" it's time to visit Williamsburg's Baci & Abbracci. Pronounced Bah-chee and Ah-ab-chee, the trattoria's name means "hugs and kisses" in Italian, says co-owner Paolo Cappiello (pictured left with bartender Satu Korp).

The love begins on the outside, where a full wall of glass and sleek wooden doors with porthole windows beckon diners. The rich wood walls, inlaid with Italian tiles, surround dark wood tables, creating an ideal setting for chef Franco Migliorini's rustic menu.

Cappiello, who opened the place in April with his brother Carmine and partner Rocco Cadolini (Cadolini owns Ruc in Tribeca), describes the dishes as "Tuscan with lots of ragus." In addition to the hearty pastas, Migliorini serves simple fish and

meat dishes such as sautéed trout with almonds and string beans, and roasted pork loin with polenta.

In the back of the casual space, a wood-burning oven produces smoky, crisp-bottomed pies, like the fragrant smoked mozzarella, pancetta and onion.

Behind the eatery, a garden with seating for 70 awaits diners. Lead your partner by the hand and settle down with a bottle of Prosecco from the 60-bottle, predominantly Italian, wine list. Nibble from the cheese plate with pears and walnuts or a caramelized orange.

Ah, that's amore. Baci & Abbracci (204 Grand St. between Driggs and Bedford avenues in Williamsburg) accepts cash only. The restaurant serves lunch and dinner daily, brunch on weekends. Entrees: \$11-\$24. For reservations, call (718) 599-6599. — Tina Barry

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# Room...

Artisans at DUMBO's weekend-long Bklyn Designs 2006 took their cues from nature's bounty: leaves, blossoms, branches and color



1



2

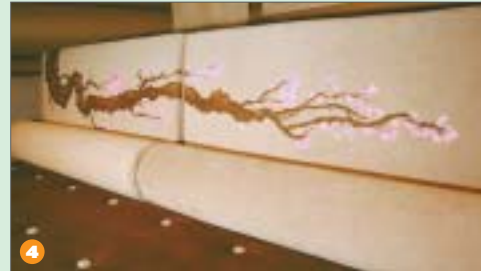


3



4

In addition to the designers who created their works from natural materials — like DEO's gleaming, inlaid wood tables by designer-fabricator Anthony Carino and Asian-inspired furnishings carved from reclaimed woods by Jan Lee for DUMBO's Sinotique — many of the artists at this year's Bklyn Designs, in DUMBO May 12-14, showcased works embellished with Mother Nature's motifs. ... While Brad Tiesdale (2) pressed a stylized branch of plum blossoms — made from kiln-formed glass he fires up in Fort Greene's Urban Glass — into concrete, Adam Alquist and Jason Gordini of A+G embellished the cushions of their couch (4) with a long branch of cherry blossoms. Jill Ayers of Williamsburg's LightenUp! Designs (1) debuted her placed-by-hand decals of pretty black and gray flowers on cream-colored porcelain lamp bases while DUMBO's Aviva Stanoff unveiled her collection of decorative pillows (3), which are hand-dyed, etched and painted with botanicals (eucalyptus, lemon leaf and baby's breath). ... Jennifer Smith and Elisheva Biernoff of Decoradar displayed their painted folding screens — replete with greenery and birds, and invited attendees to create their own murals with one of their budget-friendly DIY kits (5). — Lisa J. Curtis



4

# ...to GROW

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## A Cure for a Hurting Heart

by Anne Louise Urda

FOR MAUREEN BOYCE-HURLEY, A HURTING HEART CAN SOMETIMES BE A GOOD THING. IN HER CASE, PAIN HAS HELPED LEAD HER IN AN UNEXPECTED BUT WELCOME DIRECTION.

"There are more people hurting than folks showing love," says Boyce-Hurley and it's a problem that she felt the need to address.

Every week, *Hurting Hearts*, her show on Brooklyn Community Access Television (BCAT), tries to remind people to take a look within themselves and most importantly, to remember God's love.

"Wrong decisions cause us so much pain sometimes and we think to blame other people for what is going on," she says. "We should really examine ourselves and focus on God's way of life for us. If we go back to the Bible way, we wouldn't experience so much pain."

Boyce-Hurley feels especially chosen for her new role, recalling how Jerry Springer of all people actually helped inspire her to spread the word to others.

"I saw the impact that Jerry Springer had on people," she says. "He is such a learned man — it's such a shame that he didn't want to impart something more meaningful for the TV population."

After watching his show, Boyce-Hurley remembers one night in particular that she couldn't sleep. "I have seen so many people hurt," she says. "Rich, poor, black, white — they have all experienced hurt." If our hand or feet is hurt, we have medication, thought Boyce-Hurley, but what can we take for a hurting heart? "I quietly heard within my spirit, only you Lord Jesus can cure a hurting heart," she says.

With that thought in mind, she began her show in 2004, though it first started on another station and under a different title.

While her first inclination had been the name *Hurting Hearts*, a pastor convinced her to switch it to "Loving Hearts." Her son also thought that the name sounded

catchy, but something always bothered her about it. After talking to another pastor, who convinced her to follow her instincts, Boyce-Hurley decided to revert back to *Hurting Hearts*.

Boyce-Hurley found her way to the BCAT studios by chance after a friend left her stranded one day near the Brooklyn hospital. "Honestly speaking, I wasn't that happy with what she had done," says Boyce-Hurley. "But if she hadn't done that, I wouldn't have passed BCAT."

After exploring what the station had to offer, Boyce-Hurley decided to sign up for the training and has never looked back. "Every disappointment can be an opportunity and who knows, maybe it came directly from God," she says.

When it comes to her BCAT show, Boyce-Hurley derives tremendous pleasure from just having the chance to spread her message. She remembers, though, how timid she felt after completing the TV production training class and how nervous she was about her show. She said that staff support encouraged her to take the change.

"I have so much joy when I come to BCAT and speak about God's love," she says. "It fills my heart with joy."

Over the years, the format has evolved somewhat from how it originally began.

Initially, Boyce-Hurley would bring guests on to explain how they had overcome their own hurt but now she primarily hosts the show, often reading passages from the Bible and inviting guests to come on and sing. "I want to implement biblical principles so I do refer to the bible,"



Maureen Boyce-Hurley, host of *Hurting Hearts* on BCAT.

she says. "And it's a blessing to hear people sing—it's a blessing in my life."

The show has also helped her to overcome the hurt she has suffered in her own life. "People have said things to me that really hurt my feelings, and I thought it was the end of the world," she says. "I don't feel the hurt as much anymore. When I think I was hurting so bad, I really had it good."

The mother of two, who has a background in nursing, has lived in Brooklyn for over 20 years and is grateful for the opportunity that BCAT provides. "BCAT gives us an opportunity to express ourselves where we would be limited on other stations," she says, calling the station a "blessing."

Boyce-Hurley's efforts have not gone unrecognized either, with men and women frequently approaching her on the train and other places to thank her for her message. "I was in a department store once, and this security guard came up to me," she remembers. "He said I really appreciate and agree with what you are doing and saying."

Though she never thought she would be doing this, Boyce-Hurley embraces the new path that God has placed in front of her. "It gives me so much joy," she says. "I would like to do it forever and ever."

*Hurting Hearts* can be seen in Brooklyn on BCAT on Sundays at 6pm on Time Warner Cable channel 56, Cablevision channel 69 and streaming live online at [www.bcat.tv/bcat](http://www.bcat.tv/bcat).

FIND THE COMPLETE BCAT PROGRAMMING GUIDE IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE







# Where

Compiled  
by Susan  
Rosenthal Jay

SAT, MAY 20

## OUTDOORS AND TOURS

**VIKING FEST:** presented by the Scandinavian East Coast Museum. Refreshments and merchandise available. Noon to 5 p.m. Ellis Park, 68th Street and Colonial Road. (718) 768-5950. Free.

**SONJA STUDIO STROLL:** South of the Navy Yard Artists hosts the seventh annual SONJA stroll. Self-guided walking tour of the art created in the historic neighborhoods of Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and Bedford-Stuyvesant. Noon to 6 p.m. (718) 857-5616. www.sonjastudio.com

**GREENWOOD CEMETERY:** hosts a tour "Battle Hill and Back." Tour features historic sites including the resting places and monuments to Leonard Bernstein, Minnie, \$10. \$5 members. 1 p.m. Call for meeting location. (631) 549-4911.

**TOUR:** presented by Weeksville Heritage Center. \$15. 1 p.m. Boys and Girls High School, corner of Fulton Street and Cuyamonte Avenue. (718) 768-5250.

**WALKING TOUR:** Mauricio Lorente hosts the Metro Tour Service, taking a walk through Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and Brooklyn Heights. \$25. 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Meet at Merrill Hotel Brooklyn, 333 Adams St. (718) 789-0430.

**MIDWOOD WALK:** Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment takes a walk around the Midwood neighborhood, one of the oldest settled parts of Brooklyn. \$11. 50 members. \$5 seniors and students. 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Meet at Central Library, 125 East 16th Street. (718) 788-8500. ext. 208.

## PERFORMANCE

**MUSIC OFF THE SHELVES:** Brooklyn Public Library's Bay Ridge branch presents "Americans in Paris." Brooklyn Philharmonic performs. 1:30 p.m. 7222 Ridge Blvd. (718) 768-5709. Additional program performance Central Library, Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100. Free.

**JAZZ:** Art Lillard's Heavenly Band performs. 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Brooklyn Academy of Music, Flatbush Avenue at Pacific Street. (718) 934-6448. Free.

**RECORDER CONCERT:** Manhattan Recorder Orchestra presents "Records on the Run," a concert featuring three recorder ensembles. \$15. 4 p.m. St. Ann and the Holy Trinity Church. Morgan and Clinton streets. (718) 875-6960.

**NEXT DOOR JAZZ FEST:** presented by Saint Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church. \$10. 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Saint Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 259 Washington Ave. between DeKalb and Willoughby avenues. (718) 622-5612.

**BARBAREUM:** Classical music concert featuring Bach's violin and cello. \$30 seniors, \$25 students, 7:30 p.m. Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 624-2063.

**CONCERT:** Brooklyn Youth Chorus Academy presents "Sweet Strings of Spring." Student pianist and composer Fred Hirsch. Music from Baroque through the 21st century.

**FAMILY MOVIE:** Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch presents "Toy Story 2." 11 p.m. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100. Free.

**STORY TIME:** Barnes and Noble hosts "Dogs," a storytime for dog lovers. 11 a.m. Barnes and Noble, 106 Court St. (718) 246-4996. Free.

**SUNSET:** presented by The Dillon Child Study Center. Carousel, pony rides, live music and raffle. Call for price. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Garden Mall, 232 to 256 Clinton Ave. (718) 636-8838.

**PUPPETWORKS:** presents a marionette performance of "The Wizard of Oz." \$8. \$7 children. Recommended for ages 4 and older. 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street. (718) 965-3391.

**POETRY AND MUSIC:** Ukulele Reggae. Songwriter Jon Braman performs with poet David Austere. 4 p.m. Freebird Books and Gifts, 123 Columbia St. (718) 643-8484. Free.

## OTHER

**RUMMAGE SALE:** Raffle, face painting, and bake sale. Noon to 4 p.m. 186 St. John's Place at Seventh Avenue. (718) 399-0297.

**HEALTH FAIR:** presented by St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church. Health presentations, children's crafts and games, music, food, vendors, art exhibits, raffle and informational display. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. 259 Washington Ave., between DeKalb and Willoughby avenues. (718) 622-5612. Free.

**SUNDANCE AT BAM:** Sundance Institute film series. \$10. 11 p.m. BAM. (718) 777-7777. www.bam.org.

**BOOK SIGNING:** with Victor Segal. 4 p.m. The Book Mark Shoppe, 6905 11th Ave. (718) 360-3636. Free.

**SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER:** Holy Name Society of St. Simon and Jude RC Church hosts the 12th anniversary dinner dance and silent auction. Call for ticket info. 6:30 p.m. Free only at Chelsea. 2341 23rd Street. Manhattan. (718) 630-6245.

**FILM SERIES:** Brooklyn Academy of Music presents the film "Little Fishes." \$5 includes popcorn. 3:30 p.m. 1208 Surf Ave. between Stillman and West. 10th Street St. 5159.

## SUN, MAY 21

### OUTDOORS AND TOURS

**FIFTH AVENUE FAIR:** offers arts & crafts, gifts, live music, food, puppetmaking. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. 125th Street at Fifth Avenue in Park Slope. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**2072:** BARGEMUSIC: Classical music concert featuring a program of music by Schoels, Feldman, Wechs, Xenia and others. \$35. \$30 seniors, \$25 students. 4 p.m. Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 624-2063.

**DRAMA:** Brooklyn Lyceum presents "York Street at Winter's Block." 1:30-7:30 p.m. 227 Fourth Ave. www.brooklynlyceum.com.

**HEIGHTS PLAYERS:** "The Music Man." 2 p.m. See Sat., May 20.

**NARROWS COMMUNITY THEATER:** "Mama." 3 p.m. See Sat., May 20.

**IMPACT THEATER:** "Wounded Hopes." \$10. 3 p.m. See Sat., May 20.

**GALLERY PLAYERS:** "Once on This Island." 3 p.m. See Sat., May 20.

**PAPER MOON PLAYERS:** "Jake's Women." 3:30 p.m. See Sat., May 20.

**SACKETT GROUP:** "Owe Big Happy Family." 5 p.m. See Sat., May 20.

## CHILDREN

**MUSIC:** Music for Aardvarks and Other Mammals. Raffle, door prizes, baked goods, T-shirts, and CDs. \$15. 3 p.m. John Jay High School Auditorium, Seventh Avenue between Fourth and Fifth streets. (917) 361-4393.

**PUPPETWORKS:** "The Wizard of Oz." 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. See Sat., May 20.

**FLEA MARKET:** on Poplar Street, between Henry and Hicks streets, near the Brooklyn Bridge. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (718) 624-2063.

**DOG TEST:** AKC Canine Good Citizen Test. \$10. Entries from 10 a.m.; judging begins at noon. Volman Park, Prospect Park entrance at Ocean Avenue and Parkside Avenue. (718) 258-7229.

**BAM:** presents Sundance Film Festival screening "Coca Food" (1992). "The Unbelievable." 1999. "Scoring the Monkey" (1994). "Polyester" (1981). 500. BAM. 11th Ave. at 34th Street. (718) 777-7777. www.bam.org.

**MEMORIAL PARADE:** 36th Veterans Association presents its annual Martin Luther King Jr. parade. 1 p.m. 61st Street and Fifth Avenue. (718) 716-1813.

**JEWISH HERITAGE:** Brooklyn Jewish Center branch presents a talk by author Shmuel Alkalai. "The Jewish World to Come." 2 p.m. Also, author Jane Yip discusses her book "You Are My American." 4 p.m. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100.

**BUSINESS TALK:** Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch hosts "How to Start Your Own Small Business." 2 p.m. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100. Free.

**CURATOR TALK:** Brooklyn Museum presents a talk with Ed Seiberg on "Tree of Paradise: Jewish Mosques from the Roman Empire." \$5. \$4 students and seniors. 2 p.m. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 850-2027. Free.

**MEET THE ARTIST:** Clinton Hill Art Gallery presents artist Brooks Frederick and his exhibit "Views Inside Out." 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. 154 Vanderbilt Ave. (718) 850-2027. Free.

**SONGWRITING SERIES:** "The Gospel Experience." 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. 100 South Oxford Square, 138 S. Oxford St. (718) 765-7910.

**LECTURE:** The Vanishing Jews of the Former Soviet Union, presents Yael Strom and Elizabeth Schwartz. They discuss the dwindling Jewish enclaves in the former Soviet Union. Live music, film clips and food. 7:30 p.m. 4 p.m. Brooklyn Heights Synagogue, 131 Remsen St. (718) 622-2070.

**POETRY:** hosted by Carl Rosenstock. 6 p.m. Night and Day Restaurant, 230 Fifth Ave. (718) 399-2162. Free.

**SUNDANCE AT BAM:** Sundance Institute in collaboration with Brooklyn Academy of Music presents a film series. "Winterbush: A Love Story." 2006. \$10. 3:30 p.m. "Beyond Beats and Rhymes." 2005. 6:30 p.m. "Sherrybaby." 2005. 9 p.m. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 777-7777.

**SHORTS:** Brooklyn Lyceum presents "An Evening of the World's Best Short Films." 10 p.m. 227 Fourth Ave. (718) 624-2063.

**SCREENING:** Cafe Stuebel presents the film "History of the World Part One (1981)." 10:30 p.m. 427 Seventh Ave. at 14th Street. (718) 369-7776. Free.

## MON, MAY 22

**BONE DENSITY SCREENING:** 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. New York Methodist Hospital, Medical Office Pavilion, 263 Seventh Ave. (718) 780-5634. Free.

**KIDS MOVIE:** Cobble Hill Cinema presents "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." (1937). \$6. 1 p.m. 263 Court St. (718) 596-1132.

**BANCKENMATIC:** presents "Africa Will Rise." 1992. \$10. \$7 children and seniors. 4:30 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 777-7777.

**TRAVELING CINEMA:** Barbours Backroom presents "Forest of Bliss" (1986). 3 p.m. 376 Broadway at Sixth Avenue. Night and Day Restaurant, 230 Fifth Ave. (718) 399-2162. Free.

**READING & DISCUSSION:** Elizabeth Galfrey discusses her historical novel "Metropolis." 7:30 p.m. Prospect Park Plaza, 357 Ninth St. (718) 768-7100. Free.

**BERG LECTURE SERIES:** Rabbi Aaron Raskin presents "The Zohar." 7:30 p.m. "Dreams." Call for ticket info. 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. Congregation B'nai Abraham, 117 Remsen St. (718) 996-4800. ext. 18.

**OPEN MIC:** Carstairs at Catysback. \$3. 8 p.m. Catysback, 249 Fourth Ave. between President and Carroll streets. (718) 230-5740.

**VIEWING PARTY:** Artists presents emerging artist talent of new American contemporary design. 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Superspace, 223 Third St. (718) 679-6600. ext. 200. Free.

**COOKING CLASS:** Applewood Restaurant offers a class on "Butcher's Wife." Animals, Suckling Pig and Fish. \$15 per person/ \$200 per table. Call for time. 501 Third St. (718) 768-2043.

**ONE-ACT THEATER FESTIVAL:** Here is your chance to write a short play, direct it as an original one-act script. Open to grammar school, high school and adults. Submissions accepted at state Sen. Marty Golden's office, 10 p.m. to 5 p.m. 7403 Fifth Ave. (718) 816-2030. Free.

## TUES, MAY 23

**HEALTH SCREENING:** Free or low-cost mammograms at TWCA at Brooklyn's 8 a.m. to noon. 30th Ave. (718) 875-1190. ext. 200. Free.

**LINE DANCING:** Abilene Senior Center invites dancers of all levels for 1 p.m. 55 Pierson St. (718) 680-2142. Free.

**BANCKENMATIC:** presents films from Dance Africa 2006. \$10. \$7 children and seniors. 4:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 777-7777. Check for film info at www.bam.org.

**BUSINESS WORKSHOP:** Church Avenue Merchants Bank Association offers a workshop for participants thinking of opening a restaurant. "Kitchen Confidential: Inside the Business." 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. 884 Flatbush Ave. Registration required. (718) 282-2500. ext. 242. Free.

**ENTREPRENEUR SERIES:** Brooklyn Public Library's Business branch hosts "You Can Do It, Too." Learn how winners of the library's annual business plan contest made their entrepreneurial vision come true. 6 p.m. 280 Cadman Place West. Call to receive a seat. (718) 623-7000. Free.

**FOOD TALK:** Families First offers a talk: "Is It Safe? How to Eat Well Today." \$25/ \$40 per couple. 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. 290 Baltic St. (718) 237-1862.

**BOOK GROUP:** Discussion of "Tunnel Vision," by Keith Lore. 7 p.m. Barnes and Noble, 106 Court St. (718) 246-4996. Free.

**MUSICAL DRAMA:** American Families for Righteousness, Abatement, Ignorance and Docility presents a musical drama in two acts. \$20. 7:30 p.m. Brooklyn Lyceum, 227 Fourth Ave. (718) 624-2063.

**BANK COURT:** Sean Wilentz and Matt Wiland read from their book "The Thinking Fanny Guide to the World Cup." 8 p.m. 163 Court St. (718) 875-3677. Free.



David M. Green

Under a 'Cloud': Cobble Hill author Paul Malmon will read from his new book, "The Chinatown Death Cloud Peril," on May 24 at BookCourt, 163 Court St.

Safe? How to Eat Well Today." \$25/ \$40 per couple. 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. 290 Baltic St. (718) 237-1862.

**BOOK GROUP:** Discussion of "Tunnel Vision," by Keith Lore. 7 p.m. Barnes and Noble, 106 Court St. (718) 246-4996. Free.

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**BANK COURT:** Sean Wilentz and Matt Wiland read from their book "The Thinking Fanny Guide to the World Cup." 8 p.m. 163 Court St. (718) 875-3677. Free.

## WEDS, MAY 24

**BANCKENMATIC:** presents "Cinema Tropical: Fernando Perez." 1999. "Scoring the Monkey" (1994). "Polyester" (1981). 500. BAM. 11th Ave. at 34th Street. (718) 777-7777. www.bam.org.

**OPENING:** The Ruhl Philanthropic Arts Foundation presents The Ruhl Gallery at P.S. 11, a contemporary art laboratory. 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. 419 Waverly Ave. (718) 854-5455. Free.

**TEEN BOOK GROUP:** Discussion of the book "How I Live Now." by Meg Rosoff. 6 p.m. Barnes and Noble, 106 Court St. (718) 246-4996. Free.

**DINNER MEETING:** "The Ladies Who?" a new Bay Ridge networking club for women, hosts a meeting. 6 p.m. Call for location and ticket information. (718) 238-6493.

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**CHAMBER OPERA:** "Rural Electrification" presented by XO Projects. \$15. \$10 students and seniors. 8 p.m. The Old American Can Factory, 232 Third St. (718) 272-4335.

**ISSUE PROJECT ROOM:** Character, improvisational music and cinema with Angie Erbe, Jason Kao Hwang, and Yoko Fujimasa. \$10. 8 p.m. 100 South Oxford Square, 138 S. Oxford St. (718) 765-7910.

**BOOK COURT:** Paul Malmon reads from his book "The Chinatown Death Cloud Peril." 8 p.m. 163 Court St. (718) 875-3677. Free.

## THURS, MAY 25

**SENIOR OPEN:** The Bay Ridge Center hosts a fair featuring providers of products and services for older adults. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Fourth Avenue and 180th Street. (718) 748-0873.

**STAR WARS TALK:** Brooklyn Public Library's Bay Ridge branch hosts a talk on the movie "Star Wars: Episode II - Attack of the Clones." 7:30 p.m. 7223 Ridge Blvd. (718) 748-5709. Free.

**BANCKENMATIC:** presents "Dance Africa 2006." with "Clancio" (1996). \$10. \$7 children and seniors. 4:30 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 777-7777.

**READING:** Alvin Toffler's "Future Shock" by "My Life in France," his memoir written with his great aunt, Julia Child. 7 p.m. Night and Day Restaurant, 230 Fifth Ave. (718) 399-2162. Free.

**BARGEMUSIC:** Classical music concert of works by Beethoven, Ravel, Debussy and Brahms. \$35. \$30 seniors, \$25 students. 7:30 p.m. Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 624-2063.

**GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY:** hosts "A Night of Americana." Duck Baker, finger style guitar, performs. \$10. 8 p.m. 500 25th Street. (718) 657-4816.

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**GALLERY PLAYERS:** "Once on This Island." 8 p.m. See Sat., May 27.

**Fri, May 26**

**METROCARD MOBILE SAT:** assists senior citizens and people with disabilities who are eligible for a reduced fare MetroCard. 10 a.m. to noon. 211 Kings Highway between West 10th and West 11th streets. (718) 236-1098. Free.

**STROKE ALERT DAY:** Blood pressure and glucose screenings. Also, stroke rehabilitation information. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. New York Methodist Hospital, Medical Office Pavilion, 263 Seventh Ave. (718) 750-5367. Free.

**ARTS ON THE COMMONS:** Lunchtime concert hosted by MetroTech Business Improvement District. Today: Sam Neumeier Quartet performs. Noon. Metro Tech Commons, Jay and Duffield streets. (718) 488-8200. Free.

**BANCKENMATIC:** presents "Dance Africa 2006." with "Clancio" (1996). \$10. \$7 children and seniors. 4:30 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 777-7777.

**EXHIBIT AND RECEPTION:** "Waves" memorial created by Carrie Ventoso to honor US Incop 684 troops who have died over the past year. 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. 62 Eighth Ave. (718) 638-0659. Free.

**GALAPAGOS ART SPACE:** presents Mike Dasey in "Great Men of America." \$12. 8 p.m. 70 N. Sixth St. (212) 568-4444.

**MISS PRESENTS PAGEANT:** Young ladies aged 16 and younger are invited to compete. Sign up by June 15. Visit www.missprezentspageant.com. (718) 954-1685.

**BAM:** Brooklyn Academy of Music presents "Dance Africa." 7:30 p.m. See Sat., May 27.

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**SAT, MAY 27**

**Memorial Day Weekend**

**OUTDOORS AND TOURS**

**INTRO TO BIRD WATCHING:** At Prospect Park, 100th Street at Prospect Park. Refreshments. Enter park at Lincoln Road and Avenue A. (718) 230-4300. ext. 101. Free.

**CRUISE THE LULLWATER:** Guided tours on the electric boat Lullwater to 12-45 p.m. Brooklyn's flora and fauna by water. \$10. \$6 children. \$10 seniors. 12:45 p.m. to 4 p.m. Enter park at Lincoln Road and Avenue A. (718) 965-9919.

**GREENWOOD TOUR:** Historian Jeff Richman leads a tour around Greenwood Cemetery. "Mortuary to Valley Water." \$10. \$5 Historic Fund members. Call for meeting info. (718) 624-2063.

**WALKING TOUR:** Mauricio Lorente hosts the Metro Tour Service, taking a walk through Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and Brooklyn Heights. \$25. 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Meet at Merrill Hotel Brooklyn, 333 Adams St. (718) 789-0430.

**BRIC STUDIO:** presents "Here to Put My Father in the Ground." \$12. \$10 students. 8:30 p.m. 57 Rockwell Place. (718) 855-7882.

**BAM CAPE:** presents several Sundance cinema. \$10 food and drink minimum. 8:30 p.m. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 638-4139.

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## OUR OPINION

## Brennan's bonehead bill

ASSEMBLYMAN JIM BRENNAN certainly picked an odd time to become engaged on the topic of Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards mega-development.

The Park Slope lawmaker, who has been shockingly silent about the largest development project in his borough's history, entered the fray last week with a bizarre piece of legislation that would actually reward Ratner for proposing a 17-skycraper complex that could devastate two highly desirable low-rise neighborhoods.

In short, Brennan's all-carry, no-sticks bill would cut the size of Ratner's development to 5.85 million square feet from the roughly 8.7 million square feet it is today.

In exchange for losing some of his cherished bulk, Ratner would get hundreds of tens of dollars from the state. First, he'd get the Atlantic

Yards site—which the MTA appraised at \$214 million, but sold to Ratner for \$100 million—for free. Also, he'd be relieved of his contractual obligation to renovate the rail yards, which Brennan estimated would save the state \$300 million.

—\$200 million that each of us, as taxpayers, will now have to swallow.

In addition, Brennan's bill would require the state of New York to give Ratner \$15.4 million per year to build 2,200 affordable rental units.

Currently, the state is not subsidizing the affordable apartments in the Ratner proposal.

Lest we forget, Bruce Ratner did not have a gun to his head when he made the promise to set aside half his project for affordable housing (since downgraded to half the rental units, by the way).

He was not obligated by the state or city. He made the vow in a deal that he voluntar-

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Brennan, a man said to be considering a run for city controller, should be ashamed of this bill. The Atlantic Yards project still needs state approval, where it could still be changed or even killed—on its own merits and without a ridiculous "bailout."

If Brennan and his Albany colleagues are so concerned about the scale of the project, perhaps they should show real leadership during the coming public-approval process.

## ALL DRAWN OUT



Creative Services

## LETTERS

## Ratner's fix fails to please critics

## Opting out of home delivery

Since the beginning of the year, we've been home delivering Papers throughout Brownstone Brooklyn. Our unique system limits deliveries to two Papers per building (eliminating the kind of clutter caused by circular and menu delivery services).

We hope everyone appreciates our free home delivery, but realize there are exceptions to every rule. If you've received The Paper at home and no longer want this free service, you may "opt out" of our delivery program by filling out the online form at BrooklynPapers.com/html/about/optout.html

## Send a letter

By mail: Letters Editor, Brooklyn Papers, 55 Washington St., Brooklyn, NY 11201

By fax: (718) 834-9278.

By email: Letters@BrooklynPapers.com

All letters must be signed and include the writer's home address and phone number (only the writer's name and neighborhood are published with the letter). Letters may be edited and will not be returned. The earlier in the week you send your letter, the better.

To the editor:

In reference to your recent article on Frank Gehry's new Atlantic Yards design ("Meet Miss Brooklyn," May 15), maybe we really should commend Gehry. After all, he said his new designs were the result of listening to the body language of Brooklyn.

No wonder his tower looks like someone giving the arena the finger!

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I recently received Ratner's 12-page flyer ("Ratner's glossy fantasy-land," May 6) and am sending the "reply card" to you rather than to Ratner because, I suspect, you will pay it more attention than he will.

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**Editor's note:** Klang covered the reply card with expletives and criticism of the Atlantic Yards project that, while worthy of debate, could not, alas, be printed in a family newspaper.

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Here is an open letter to Borough President Markovitz:

When I spoke with you some time ago, at the march to save the historic view corridor between the statue of Minerva in Green-Wood Cemetery

and the Statue of Liberty (to refresh your memory: I was the guy in the "Yo Markovitz: It's the Community, Stupid!" t-shirt), you had just made a great speech about the importance of protecting the human-scale of low-rise Brooklyn.

In this speech, it sounded as if you had swiped your talking points from Dan Goldstein [of Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn]. But your words that day so contradicted your position on the hugely non-contextual Atlantic Yards project that I had to confront you with the disparity.

First, you claimed the area in which Ratner had staked his greedy claim was not residential, as opposed to the outlying "suburban" areas of Brooklyn—Bay Ridge, etc.—which, you said, should be protected from out-of-scale overdevelopment. That, of course, is an absurd assertion. Prospect Heights is largely residential.

If you'd bother to walk around the neighborhood with your eyes even half-open, you'd see that most of it is low-rise, livable, lovable Brooklyn. Second, you told me to just wait and see. You suggested that Ratner would be scaled back considerably. But last week's unveiling of architect Frank Gehry's slightly revised design puts the lie to that claim as well.

This thing is just huge! It's even larger than the original plan—which is the one you and I had been discussing.

Yes, this new plan is a tad smaller than the previously unveiled "Vegas" version, but still bigger than the horrendous original.

To say that it's scaled back is to engage in the same kind of flim-flammy that unscrupulous retailers do when they mark-up prices before a sale, and then offer a small percentage off of the previously hiked price.

Cavin Smith, Park Slope

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To the editor:

I agree with your editorial that Century 21 is buying off the community on the cheap ("An ugly payoff," May 6). Leaders like Councilman Vincent Gentile show that they're more interested in photo opportunities than saving valuable community resources like the Mark Lanes.

Recently, Gentile gladly took Century 21's \$10,000 check and handed it over to four neighborhood youth groups.

Granted, Century 21 and I have butted heads in the past, but my beef is with the groups that took that money. They were the same groups who were yelling to save the Mark Lanes.

I guess a few thousand bucks clouds people's memories. There are many people of all walks of life who did not benefit from this check, you know. Now, we will have to travel out of our own

neighborhood just to bow!

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I didn't appreciate some of the comments of tourists coming off the Queen Mary 2 ("QM2" here. What is it for us?," April 15), saying that Brooklyn is a depressed area. I once went on the QM2 to England and thought that some of their country was deplorable. But at least I had the good manners not to say anything. These people should be on the ferry, not the Queen Mary 2.

I hope our borough president, tells these people a few things about Brooklyn. People like that shouldn't get to come to our great borough.

Name withheld, Bay Ridge

## Clarification

In The Papers' coverage of BK Fashion Week(erd), ("Look sharp," GoBrooklyn, May 6), we referred to designer Khalil's collection as "schizophrenic." The term was meant to convey our approval of the amazing diversity of Khalil's offerings, not to suggest any link to the mental illness, schizophrenia. The Brooklyn Papers regrets the use of the term.

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Brooklyn's **REAL** newspapers

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ART DIRECTOR Leah Mitch (ext. 127)

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## Common Sense on Class Size

By Randi Weingarten

Sad to say, foresight is an attribute seldom displayed these days. Just about everything seems to be geared toward the short term, the quick fix, the windfall profit.

Unfortunately, that holds true in our public schools with budgetary choices that often reflect a failure to think long term. Year after year, we fail to make critical investments that would provide permanent benefits to students, parents and educators.

That is certainly the case with class size, which is 10 to 60 percent higher in New York City than in the rest of the state, depending on grade and subject. Education reforms come and go as different mayors and chancellors try new - or not-so-new - initiatives without addressing that key issue.

The repeated failure to reduce class size condemns us to fall short of our education goals, which shouldn't surprise anyone. Until we have smaller classes taught by qualified teachers we will not fundamentally advance teaching and learning for our children. It's common sense.

Critics say reducing class size by hiring more educators is simply a teacher union play to get more members and more dues. That attitude ignores research that shows that smaller classes allow teachers to give students more individual attention, reduce discipline problems, increase graduation rates and help students do better on the high-stakes tests that drive education policy from the federal level on down.

Think about it: A teacher will have less time for each child - both in class and in all the marking of students' work - if there are fewer students in the class. It's reasonable for teachers to expect better results with a class of 22 students as opposed to the classes of 34 that we see in many of our schools. Again, it's common sense - bolstered in this case by a body of research.

That logic led to an extraordinary coalition of civic associations, community groups, education advocates and parent organizations bonding to address the class size issue. The coalition is called New Yorkers for Smaller Classes, and twice within the last three years it collected over 100,000 signatures to put a referendum on the ballot so voters could voice their opinions on this issue. But both times Mayor Bloomberg knocked the issue off the ballot. The courts are now deciding whether to let voters decide.

The UFT is supporting a massive campaign to address this problem once and for all, and the timing is right. The city recently secured its largest school building campaign ever with more than \$1.1 billion in new capital construction funds that could result in at least 107 new schools containing 66,000 new classroom seats. So lack of space will no longer be an excuse. With a new

governor coming into office and only one more court battle to go in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case - a 13-year battle to get New York City its fair share of state education aid - now is the time to fight for and plan for the investments we know will help our children succeed.

That's why parents and educators are launching this campaign to convince the public and our elected officials that reducing class sizes is a long-term investment that must be made. Pulitzer Prize-winning author and former New York City high school teacher - Frank McCourt has graciously volunteered to be honorary chairman of our class size coalition. Details on the campaign can be found on the coalition Web site, [www.newyorkersformallerclasses.org](http://www.newyorkersformallerclasses.org).

On Thursday, May 18, educators and coalition members will conduct informational picketing in the morning and/or afternoon at public schools across the city. They also will conduct a citywide leafletting campaign at key transportation hubs on Thursday, May 25. An immediate Internet ad and a major TV ad in coming weeks will be part of the campaign.

We need everyone's support in this campaign because it will take more than just educators and parents. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to lower class size for all children in the city, and we cannot afford to miss it. With your help, we can finally make a crucial long-term investment in our children's future that will benefit an entire generation. Please join us and let your voice be heard!

## WHO SAID SUMMER WAS FOR TAKING IT EASY?



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## OUR OPINION

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In short, Brennan's all-carry, no-sticks bill would cut the size of Ratner's development to 5.85 million square feet from the roughly 8.7 million square feet it is today.

In exchange for losing some of his cherished bulk, Ratner would get hundreds of millions of dollars from the state. First, he'd get the Atlantic

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But Brennan would not only allow Ratner to renege on that promise — but pay him to do so! Brennan, a man said to be considering a run for city controller, should be ashamed of this bill. The Atlantic Yards project still needs state approval, where it could still be changed or even killed — on its own merits and without a ridiculous "bailout."

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Sad to say, foresight is an attribute seldom displayed these days. Just about everything seems to be geared toward the short term, the quick fix, the windfall profit.

Unfortunately, that holds true in our public schools with budgetary choices that often reflect a failure to think long term. Year after year, we fail to make critical investments that would provide permanent benefits to students, parents and educators.

That is certainly the case with class size, which is 10 to 60 percent higher in New York City than in the rest of the state, depending on grade and subject. Education reforms come and go as different mayors and chancellors try new - or not-so-new - initiatives without addressing that key issue.

The repeated failure to reduce class size condemns us to fall short of our education goals, which shouldn't surprise anyone. Until we have smaller classes taught by qualified teachers we will not fundamentally advance teaching and learning for our children. It's common sense.

Critics say reducing class size by hiring more educators is simply a teacher union ploy to get more members and more dues. That attitude ignores research that shows that smaller classes allow teachers to give students more individual attention, reduce discipline problems, increase graduation rates and help students do better on the high-stakes tests that drive education policy from the federal level on down.

Think about it: A teacher will have more time for each child - both in class and in all the marking of students' work - if there are fewer students in the class. It's reasonable for teachers to expect better results with a class of 22 students as opposed to the classes of 34 that we see in many of our schools. Again, it's common sense - bolstered in this case by a body of research.

That logic led to an extraordinary coalition of civic associations, community groups, education advocates and parent organizations bonding to address the class size issue. The coalition is called New Yorkers for Smaller Classes, and twice within the last three years it collected over 100,000 signatures to put a referendum on the ballot so voters could voice their opinions on this issue. But both times Mayor Bloomberg knocked the issue off the ballot. The courts are now deciding whether to let voters decide.

The UFT is supporting a massive campaign to address this problem once and for all, and the timing is right. The city recently secured its largest school building campaign ever with more than \$1.1 billion in new capital construction funds that could result in at least 107 new schools containing 66,000 new classroom seats. So lack of space will no longer be an excuse. With a new

governor coming into office and only one more court battle to go in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case - a 13-year battle to get New York City its fair share of state education aid - now is the time to fight for and plan for the investments we know will help our children succeed.

That's why parents and educators are launching this campaign to convince the public and our elected officials that reducing class sizes is a long-term investment that must be made. Pulitzer Prize-winning author - and former New York City high school teacher - Frank McCourt has graciously volunteered to be honorary chairman of our class size coalition. Details on the campaign can be found on the coalition Web site, [www.newyorkersforsmallerclasses.org](http://www.newyorkersforsmallerclasses.org).

On Thursday, May 18, educators and coalition members will conduct informational picketing in the morning and/or afternoon at public schools across the city. They also will conduct a citywide leafletting campaign at key transportation hubs on Thursday, May 25. An immediate Internet ad and a major TV ad in coming weeks will be part of the campaign.

We need everyone's support in this campaign because it will take more than just educators and parents. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to lower class size for all children in the city, and we cannot afford to miss it. With your help, we can finally make a crucial long-term investment in our children's future that will benefit an entire generation. Please join us and let your voice be heard!

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# Backers of waterfront park sue over site's privatization

By Ariella Cohen  
The Brooklyn Papers

Even as work continues on Brooklyn Bridge Park, park advocates sued the Empire State Development Corporation on Tuesday claiming the agency broke the law by including private housing in a public park.

The Brooklyn Bridge Park Legal Defense Fund lawsuit says 1,210 units of housing within the 85-acre public waterfront site would set a "dangerous precedent."

"This is a scheme to give condo developers public land," said Defense Fund President Judi Finnegan. Supporters of Brooklyn Bridge Park, a housing, commercial and recreational development along the Brooklyn Heights and DUMBO waterfronts, say it sets a different, and hardly dangerous, precedent. Publicly accessible green space will be kept in good repair with revenue generated by condo maintenance fees, they say.

But critics said the "park-



BEFORE AND AFTER: A computer rendering of a view of the Manhattan Bridge after new "park" building is built.

men" plan would end up pitting residents against park users in an uncomfortable pas-de-pas.

"There is tremendous conflict of interest when private interests try to maintain what is a public entity," said Bronson Binger, a former assistant commissioner in the Parks Department, who supports the lawsuit.

"There are safety issues,

noise issues — the needs of residents and park users are in conflict."

The lawsuit comes one week after superstar residential architect Robert A.M. Stern joined the park's design team. Stern will help establish guidelines for the development of five residential buildings — including a small hotel — and three retail and office sites

within the park's borders.

A building at 360 Furman St., renamed One Brooklyn Bridge Park, will be the first condominium to open on the parkland.

The developer, Robert Levine, cites the park's planned marina, landscaped greens and "round-the-clock security" in his marketing materials.

# Bill: State should pay Bruce to build less at A'Yards site

By Gersh Kuntzman  
The Brooklyn Papers

Bruce Ratner would get hundreds of millions of dollars in state funds if he builds less at Atlantic Yards, under a new state Assembly bill.

Assemblyman Jim Brennan (D-Park Slope) has proposed capping the total size of Ratner's Atlantic Yards mega-development at 5.85 million square feet — down from the 8.7 million square feet in the current project, which features 17 skyscrapers, 6,900 units of housing, retail and office space, a hotel and a 19,000-seat arena for the relocated New Jersey Nets.

To compensate Ratner for the smaller project, Brennan's bill would give the developer the Atlantic Yards site for free, rather than charging him \$100 million for it. The MTA had appraised the site at \$214 million.

In addition, Brennan's bill would relieve Ratner of his obligation to renovate the Long Island Rail Road yard, saving him another \$200 million, the assemblyman said.

Brennan's bill would also require the state — rather than Ratner himself — to subsidize the 50-percent of the project that Ratner agreed to set aside as affordable housing.

"This bill is like negotiating with a hijacker," said Daniel Goldstein, spokesman for the anti-Atlantic Yards group, Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn. "Brennan is saying, 'OK, OK, here's some money. Just don't build it so big!' He's throwing money at a developer to not build something he hasn't even gotten the right to build yet."

Brennan's spokesman John O'Keefe disagreed, saying the bill was merely an effort to make the project smaller, but still keep it viable for the developer.

"The site costs and [Ratner's] affordable-housing commitment are making the project bulkier," O'Keefe said. "It's making him add millions of square feet."

It's unclear whether the bill has any chance of becoming law. Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (D-Manhattan) is a supporter of the project.

"That pretty much makes a bill like this impossible," said a source close to the project.

A spokesman for Silver declined to comment.

Officially, Ratner's people were playing it close to the vest.

"We're studying it," Jim Stuckey, a Forest City Ratner vice-president, said this week.

But Stuckey added that shrinking the super-sized project is not financially feasible for the developer.

"To develop this site, we have to spend \$600 million on infrastructure before we put a shovel in the ground," Stuckey said on WNYC radio.

"On top of that, we've committed that half of our 4,500 rental apartments are going to be affordable- and middle-income rental apartments, where no one pays more than 30 percent of their annual household income to live."

"That's a very, very significant commitment. And the problem, when you want to build that type of commitment ... it demands that there be a certain amount of density," he said.

But Goldstein disputed that, too.

"It is impossible to judge the financials without the financials," he said. "Ratner has not shown anyone his numbers, so we don't know how much density he needs."

# Study: Residential permits won't solve D'Town parking

By Ariella Cohen  
The Brooklyn Papers

A residential parking permit plan in Downtown Brooklyn would not solve the area's persistent parking problem, a new study has determined.

The study, initiated due to concerns about traffic after Downtown was upzoned in 2004 to encourage development, looked at parking permit rules in cities like Boston and San Francisco — but determined that such schemes were unsuitable for the mean streets of Brooklyn.

"There are too many cars and not enough spots," admitted Michael Burke, executive director of the Downtown Brooklyn Council, which co-sponsored the study.

At any given time, the number of cars trailing



Many Brooklynites believe residential parking permits could help locals find spots, but a new study indicates otherwise.

throughout Downtown Brooklyn is double the number of available curb spots.

In commuter-heavy Brooklyn Heights, there are a whopping 4,103 cars for 876 spots.

Fort Greene has 1,759 cars for 1,089 spots, while Boerum Hill has 1,996 cars for 1,769 spots.

The study also showed that two-thirds of parkers in Downtown Brooklyn spent 10 minutes looking for their space — meaning that driving around and looking for parking is causing "significant" traffic congestion along the streets.

A residential parking permit system would forbid non-permit-holders on side streets, while allowing residents to park there (provided they buy the permit, of course).

Even after hearing the study's disappointing results, Downtown residents and their elected leaders plan to fight for the permits.

"No one ever said that we were going to find a space for every resident's car, but the least we can do is give people

who live in our neighborhoods a priority over people who work here," said Evan Thies, spokesman for City Councilman David Vassky (D-Brooklyn Heights).

One way to solve the problem of limited parking would be to let the price of the permits fluctuate on the open market.

Critics said that plan can't work because the permits would become prohibitively expensive.

"The permit would only benefit those who could afford it" under that scenario, said Burke.

The Downtown Brooklyn Council will meet with city traffic experts and community leaders next week to discuss the study's findings and plot a way forward.

"Perhaps the best option will be to do nothing at all," Burke said.

## CHECKIN' IN WITH...

## Hip Hasid Simcha Weinstein

It's not all that common for Hasidic rabbis to stand out. But Rabbi Simcha Weinstein of Pratt Institute in Clinton Hill and B'nai Abraham in Brooklyn Heights, is certainly not common. Not only does he have a devilish sense of humor and his own Web site — [www.rabbitsimcha.com](http://www.rabbitsimcha.com) — he also has a new book that is bound to be a hit far beyond the Talmudic bookstores of Crown Heights. "Up, Up and Oy Vey!" (Leviathan Press) is an amazing, stupendous, astounding look at the secret Jewish identities behind many of your favorite superheroes. No, Lois, Superman was not a Jew — but his creator was. Weinstein checked in this week with our own Gersh Kuntzman, himself a heroic Jew, on the eve of next weekend's opening of "X-Men 3."



**Q: So all the superheroes are secretly Jews?**

A: No, no, no. Let's get this right or else everyone will be mad. I don't say that Jews are superheroes and Superman is a Jew. But many of the men who created these comic icons were Jewish. Most of them never went to temple or Hebrew school, but their notion of heroes came from Jewish culture. Why do the Fantastic Four, which is one of Jack Kirby's comics, get enslaved by a futuristic pharaoh? Why does Captain America get enslaved in a similar way?

**Q: Well, Batman gets enslaved too, but I'm pretty sure that Bruce Wayne ain't a member of the tribe, if you know what I mean.**

A: True, but as my book shows, Batman is yet another of the orphaned superheroes. His mother and father were killed in front of his eyes when he was 8 — it's clearly a Holocaust metaphor. And Superman, too. His name in Kryptonite is Kal El, which means "the voice of God" in Hebrew. Here's a kid whose home world gets destroyed and he flees on a rocket ship. That's such a parallel to what was going on in Europe after these writers fled here.

**Q: How does a Hasidic rabbi get interested in this kind of stuff? Aren't your main superheroes Moses, Abraham and Rabbi Schneerson?**

A: I always tell people that I didn't grow up religious. I grew up normal. I went to university in Manchester. And later, I got a job as a location scout in the film industry. It was certainly exciting, but I soon discovered that the people were soulless and worthless. At the end of the shoot, you'd have the wrap party and it was all fake.

**Q: Was this England or Hollywood?**

A: England.

**Q: Oh, well there you go. If you had been in Hollywood, I'm sure you would've found so much more depth.**

A: The point is, I felt this pull to go to Israel. And when I was there, I found something deeper and meaningful. And I don't miss the movie industry at all. But I do miss storytelling. So I got more religious. I wanted to unite my spirituality with pop culture. And it works. Most times, when I give a sermon in the synagogue, everyone, even my wife, falls asleep. But when I bring up some pop culture topic, everyone perks up.

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# Ousted art students in DUMBO show

By Ariella Cohen  
The Brooklyn Papers

It's strictly PG from here on out at the Brooklyn War Memorial.

One week after a Brooklyn College student art show was removed from the public building by Brooklyn Borough Parks Commissioner Julius Spiegel because of its "inappropriate" content, the Parks Department said the space may host art shows again — children's art shows, that is.

"We are considering establishing a youth arts program," said Parks spokesman Warner Johnston.

Spiegel declined to say if artwork for adults will ever return to the Cadman Plaza memorial — which once

housed an American Legion Post and community office.

The college began using it as a gallery six years ago under a verbal agreement with Spiegel, who has repeatedly declined to answer questions about why he shut down the Brooklyn College Masters of Fine Arts thesis show, "Plan B."

The show — renamed "Plan C" (for censored) last Thursday after Spiegel shut it down and changed the locks on the building — features abstract paintings, video art, a delicate sculpture made of pins and a live rat, a sculpture of a man's torso that included a narrative about a homosexual encounter involving a man named Dick Cheney.

The students have accepted an invitation from DUMBO developer David Walentas to show their work in a vacant space at 70 Washington St.

But the DUMBO show will be far smaller than the original because 80 percent of the art was destroyed after Spiegel's sudden shutdown, said artist Tamas Vesz.

"Most of us aren't even sure what we are going to show," said Vesz, whose multimedia installation "Inner Beauty," was badly damaged after college workers used it to pack other art works.

The college has offered to reimburse students for damaged audio-visual equipment and lost materials.

"Plan C" will be on exhibit in DUMBO from May 24-June 16.

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# Ratner can't buy love

Continued from page 1

Bliss at the cash bar, Smartmom asked one friend, a member of the PTA, if she was offended by the developer's contribution.

"Absolutely not. We take the money. We don't care where it comes from," said PTA Mom. "We don't discriminate when it comes to contributions. Why should we refuse his money?"

Smartmom knew she was exaggerating. Of course the school discriminates. Would it take money from a tobacco company or the American Nazi party (not that Ratner is in that category, but still...).

PTA Mom said that most of the PS 321 parents are opposed to the Atlantic Yards development. But she saw no connection between the donation and the project.

"Ratner has been donating to the auction for five years—even before Atlantic Yards was announced."

**I**N THE DAYS leading up to the auction, PTA co-president Amy Bender, whose husband, Bruce, is a top Forest City Ratner exec, took heat for the developer's contribution. An "expose" in the Daily News didn't help.

"I think she's very strong," said PTA Mom. "She works hard for the school and doesn't deserve to be demonized just because her husband works for Bruce Ratner."

PTA Mom was even backed up by Cool Architect Mom, who is actually a member of Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn: "I don't think it should be personal. But I do think we should not have given them such a big mention in the program. It makes it look like PS 321 is supporting the Atlantic Yards project."

Prior to the auction, Cool Architect Mom discussed her objections with members of the PTA.

"He got away awfully cheap," Cool Architect Mom pointed out. "For \$7,500, he gets his name big on the program and creates the perception that PS 321 supports the project. And we don't let it go against everything the school stands for."

And that's "Community," she said without missing a beat. "This school is about community, inclusion and human scale—the opposite of Ratner's project."

Then Smartmom spotted Bender, a friendly and dedicated organizer who devotes herself full-time to her non-paying PTA job. PS 321 is blessed to have her and many others, who donate their talent and energy to the PTA. A science lab, music, art, chess, dance, an annual poetry magazine, and a meditation program are just some of the perks made possible by the PTA.

But the PTA is not the only reason the school is considered one of the city's top public schools. It helps that PS 321 has a passionate, whip-

## SMART mom

By Louise Crawford

smart principal, great students, fantastic teachers and a very involved parent body.

And they're not all white and affluent, despite the stereotypes you read in other newspapers. Twenty-one percent of the kids receive school lunch (while the other 79% bring their own temped sandwiches and gluten-free Oreos).

The school does reflect (well, sort of) the ethnic diversity of Brooklyn, with a student body that's 61 percent white, 19 percent black, 16 percent Hispanic and 6 percent Asian.

The principal, Elizabeth Phillips, is big on free events that build community, like the International Dinner, Family Dance Night, Turn Off Your TV Night, and the Spring Potluck, where hundreds of parents gather in the school's backyard for a festive meal.

Smartmom surveyed the festive crowd of familiar faces in their 1960s regalia. Missing were the parents who couldn't afford to pay \$45 for the privilege of dining on Citrus Chicken, and watching other affluent parents bid on a Ratner-donated Nets basketball package for eight people (which, by the way, went for more than \$2,000).

The Christie's auctioneer (a colleague of PS 321 parents) also sold off donated week-ends at people's country houses, a vacation to the Dominican Republic, a health club membership, a child's fantasy birthday party at KeySpan Park (does that mean we support the Cyclones?) and an Italian cooking lesson and dinner with the famed Lidia Bastianich—all for top dollar.

**M**ONEY FOR THE school is a win-win for the kids, so it's no wonder that PS 321 is so overcrowded (more than 1,200 kids in a school built for 900).

Sometimes Smartmom feels guilty that her kids go to such a great public school. What about the families in poor neighborhoods that aren't so lucky? Isn't there some way to spread the wealth? Don't all kids deserve the same quality of education as the kids of Park Slope? Don't all kids merit donations from Bruce Ratner?

Of course they do, but there's a Catch-22 at work. After all, the success of PS 321 has done wonders for Park Slope's real-estate values, which, in turn, drives more money to the school.

To quell the guilt and sense of entitlement, Smartmom returned to the cash bar for a

doesn't mean we endorse his project."

Clearly, the parents are too smart for that. They want their cake (school enrichments), their progressive politics (human-scale architecture, please), and their middle-class guilt (oy, life is so unfair) and be able to eat it, too.

Another glass of Chardonnay, anyone?

Smartmom emailed Ratner spokesperson, Joe DePlasco, who wrote back, "Forest City Ratner also supports a wide range of educational and recreational programs throughout Brooklyn and the city."

When Smartmom pressed him for the name of a specific school or recreation program they support, he responded: "Sorry, that's all we have to say on the issue."

Hmmmm. He couldn't give just one name? That may work on Dumb Editor, but does DePlasco think Smartmom is an influence peddler or just boss of the PTA co-president's husband, he chooses to put his money on Seventh Avenue and First Street. So, back to Dumb Editor's original question: do those dollars buy the opinions of this politically savvy PS 321 crowd?

Not a chance.

"I think it's insulting that anyone thinks our opinions can be bought," said Mommy Group Friend. "Just because the PTA takes Ratner's money

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